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THE ROMAN EMPIRE

B.C. 29—A.D. 476

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BY

H. STUART JONES, M.A.

FORMERLY FELLOW AND TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME. ORDENTLICHES MITGLIED DES KAISERLICH DEUTSCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTS

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The Story of the Nations

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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A

DONNA ERSILIA GAETANI

CONTESSA LOVATELLI

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GRANDE · AVGVSTO · E · ROMANO · ANCORA

PREFACE

To tell the story of the Roman Empire in its fulness is a task for which no man now living is qualified, and it is probable that the historian who is destined to achieve that task with success has yet to be born. Theodor Mommsen himself never ventured to write a general history of the Imperial period, but contented himself with giving a survey of Roman civilisation as it existed in the various provinces; and his successors — Hirschfeld, von Domaszewski, Kornemann, Rostowzew, and others — are still engaged in reducing to order the vast and ever-increasing mass of material afforded by coins, inscriptions and papyri. It is true that Seeck, in his *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, has treated with some fulness a very important period — that in which the principate founded by Augustus was finally transformed into an undisguised absolutism by Diocletian and Constantine; but his narrative after all covers but a few years, and, moreover, Seeck is not exempt from the tendency

to present ingenious—sometimes over-ingenious—theories in the guise of dogmas which it were heresy to dispute. It is deeply to be regretted that the death of Professor H. F. Pelham cut short the hope that the history of the Empire might have been written by one whose knowledge of men and their rulers made him specially capable of appreciating the methods of Imperial government; the influence of his published and unpublished views will be traced by those who are acquainted with them in many pages of this book. The author has necessarily made use of Schiller's *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, as the only scientific narrative of the Imperial period, but no statement made in that work has been repeated without verification, and an endeavour has been made to incorporate the results of the twenty-four years of constant research and discovery which have passed since Schiller's volumes were published. It were too much to hope that all—even of the more important—of those results have found due recognition in these pages; but the writer's task has been lightened by the organised industry of German scholars, bearing fruit in such monumental works as the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* and the new edition of Pauly's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*; and the attempt to trace, if only in the briefest outline, the story which no ancient historian knew how to tell, and which modern historians are only beginning to learn, may perhaps prove to have been worth making.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Page 21, *for* Prahates *read* Phraates.

Page 32, *for* Prahates II. *read* Phraataces.

Page 190, line 21. Although Durostorum probably became a legionary camp under Domitian (von Domaszewski in *Philologus*, 1900, p. 541), Troesmis can scarcely have been established as such before Trajan's reign (Filow in *Klio*, 1907, p. 457).

Pages 202, 203. Paul Meyer (*Klio*, 1907, p. 124) has endeavoured to show that Pius visited Egypt and Syria in 153–5 A.D.: but the analysis of the Life of Pius in the Historia Augusta recently published by Otto Schulz (*Das Kaiserhaus der Antonine und der letzte Historiker Roms*, 1907, pp. 13, 15, 227), places the evidence of that work in a new light; and we should expect a more explicit reference to the Emperor's presence in Egypt in the Edict of Sempronius Liberalis (*B.G.U.* 372, col. i. 7 ff.). It is to be remarked that Pius never bears the title *proconsul* in official documents (*cf.* p. 250).

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The thanks of the author are due to Mr. G. F. Hill of the British Museum for help kindly rendered in the selection of coins for reproduction, and to Professor Strzygowski for supplying a photograph of the Baal-stele of Elagabalus; also to Professor Cichorius, the Römisch-Germanische Kommissionverband, Herren F. Bruckmann, the Oxford University Press, and Mr. John Murray, for permission to use illustrations and maps.

THE STORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

I

AUGUSTUS

ON the thirteenth of August, B.C. 29, and the two following days, almost two years after the victory of Actium, Augustus celebrated the triple triumph which proclaimed the subjection of three continents. On the first day a train of Gallic and Illyrian captives marched behind the conqueror; on the second the beaks of Antony's ships were borne in procession, and some Asiatic potentates who had been his allies were led in golden chains; the climax was reached in the African triumph, graced by Cleopatra's two children—the last of the Ptolemies—and the priceless spoils of Egypt. The scene recalled the quadruple triumph of the great Dictator, celebrated seventeen years before; but the Romans were spared the humiliation of seeing their fellow-citizens amongst the captives. Yet it was noted that the fellow-

magistrates of Augustus, instead of leading the procession according to custom, followed in his train. In name the first citizen of a Republic, he was in reality the undisputed master of the Roman world, already worshipped as God incarnate by Greeks and Orientals, reigning over Egypt as the legitimate successor of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies, and, above all, commanding the sworn allegiance of at least 300,000 soldiers.

Three days later the round of ceremonies was closed by the dedication of the temple of the Divine Julius, and men began to ask themselves what form of government it would please his successor to establish. The answer was not given at once. Augustus was a man of very different mould from the Dictator. Lacking his commanding genius, he possessed the infinite tact and patience which succeed where genius fails. Secure in his own grasp of realities, he knew that men are ruled by imagination and cannot be moulded like the potter's clay. Julius Cæsar had treated the forms of the Republican constitution with scarcely veiled contempt, and had shown clearly that his aim was to efface the traditions of 460 years and restore the monarchy. Augustus had no mind to repeat the mistake which had cost the Dictator his life. He saw that the great traditions of the all-conquering Republic formed an inheritance of which Rome would not be robbed, and that only by cherishing them could he command the services of the ablest men without destroying their self-respect. He determined, therefore, that his government should be a monarchy without a king.

In the meanwhile he continued to exercise the extra-constitutional and practically unlimited powers originally conferred by the Roman people on himself, Antony, and Lepidus, in B.C. 43, as *triumviri reipublicae constituendae*. Antony was now dead, Lepidus a prisoner in exile; Augustus concentrated in himself the authority of the state. In B.C. 36, moreover, he had received the *tribunicia potestas* for life, after the precedent of the Dictator Julius; that is to say, he enjoyed personal sacrosanctity, an unlimited power of veto, and the prestige of a democratic magistracy created for the protection of the people's rights. Finally, he was year by year elected consul; and it is probable that in the years 29 and 28 B.C. he was careful to perform his public acts, so far as possible, in virtue of this constitutional office.

In 28 B.C. the foundations of the new government were laid. Augustus' colleague in the consulship was Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the general who had won most of his battles and his most trusted friend. The powers of the censorship, which in constitutional theory were inherent in the consuls, were called into action. On this occasion the most important censorial function was the *lectio senatus*, or revision of the roll of the Senate. The name of Augustus was inscribed at the head of the roll, and he thus acquired the honorary title of *princeps senatus*, a fact which contributed its share of meaning to the wider application of the term *princeps*. The Senate was purged of unworthy elements, almost two hundred of its members being struck off the roll; its social prestige was thus restored, and it was fitted to become once

more an instrument of government. In the same year Augustus annulled the unconstitutional acts of the triumvirs and, finally, on January 13, 27 B.C., he divested himself of his extraordinary powers and—as the act was officially described—"restored the Republic." The day was celebrated as a festival in the Roman Calendar, and coins were struck which designated Augustus "champion of the liberties of the Roman people." But on the day which saw those liberties restored, they were resigned once and for all into the hands of their restorer.

By a decree of Senate and people Augustus was immediately invested with powers which were not indeed singly lacking in constitutional precedent, but were sufficient to make him supreme ruler of the state, although the nominal independence of the Republic and its governing body, the Senate, was retained. Under the Republic Rome had been ruled by yearly magistrates, invested with co-ordinate authority, whose departments (*provinciae*) were only in part specialised; and when she became mistress of the Mediterranean basin the system was only modified by the creation of fresh *provinciae* in the new sense of oversea territories in which magistrates exercised the *imperium*, or supreme military and civil authority, without being subject to the checks and limitations imposed upon it in Rome. In practice these territories were not governed in any true sense, but merely exploited by an oligarchic clique, whose distribution of the spoils was strictly determined by custom, until they became the base of operations conducted by

able and ambitious military leaders, the greatest of whom finally overthrew the Republic. In this period the dormant sovereignty of the people was revived in the interest of the military commanders, upon whom powers far transcending the normal share of a member of the senatorial ring were conferred. Augustus could therefore appeal to precedent when, being already consul and thus chief magistrate in Rome and Italy, he further received at the people's hands a *provincia* embracing practically all those external possessions of the Roman people which contained military garrisons—a ring of frontier territories encircling the lands where no troops were needed—and thus became commander-in-chief of the army. This left a number of *provinciae* which the Senate could apportion to its members: two of these governorships—Asia[1] and Africa[2]—were of considerable importance, and the latter for some time even carried with it the independent command of a legion. Nevertheless, Augustus as consul possessed a higher degree of *imperium* than his senatorial colleagues, so that no conflict of authority was ultimately possible.

Other prerogatives and distinctions were conferred upon Augustus by special enactments. But the essence of his authority is to be sought in the unbroken tenure of the *imperium* exercised in a *provincia* incomparably wider than those of his colleagues, supplemented by the *tribunicia potestas* to which reference has already been made. In B.C. 23

[1] *i.e.*, the west coast of Asia Minor.
[2] Practically equivalent to Tunis.

the Principate—as the new constitution is most conveniently termed—received its permanent shape. In that year Augustus resigned the consulship, which he had held for nine years in succession. In the provinces assigned to him he continued to exercise his authority *pro consule*, as the Romans expressed it; but he gave up the pre-eminence in Rome and Italy which belonged to the consuls, and special enactments were passed to remedy this defect. Henceforth, moreover, he laid greater stress on the *tribunicia potestas*, which was annually numbered, and became the basis of dating. Finally, it is to be noted that these powers were conferred upon Augustus for a limited period of time, and formally renewed at intervals of five, and afterwards of ten years.

Thus Augustus preserved the Roman Republic in name inviolate, and was careful to assume no title, such as king or dictator, which was offensive to Roman sentiment. The modern title of Emperor is derived from the word *Imperator*, which Augustus used as a personal name and claimed as his inheritance from the Dictator Julius. "Augustus" is an epithet, whose nearest counterpart is to be sought in the phrase "by the grace of God" applied to modern rulers. It was conferred upon him on January 16, 27 B.C.

The defect of the system lay in its ambiguity. Since the Republic was kept alive in theory, it was easy for a veiled opposition to maintain itself, and, without seriously impeding the work of government, to produce sensible friction. Above all, dynastic successions, which Augustus was determined to estab-

Photo] [Rhodescian.

AUGUSTUS AS A YOUTH.

(*Vatican.*)

lish, could only be secured by the same indirect and evasive methods which served to perpetuate the authority of the Emperor. On the death of the *princeps* the Republican institutions would automatically recover their primitive independence. Augustus met the difficulty by associating with himself in each renewal of his constitutional powers a colleague who, if he survived him, would remain in possession of the reins of government.

But it was the least part of Augustus' task to devise a theory by which a monarchy might be enabled to masquerade as a republic. He was not neglectful of forms, but it was in the realm of facts that his chief work was accomplished. For forty-three years he laboured incessantly to give the world which lay at his feet an organised government worthy of the name, and to solve the practical problems which the Republic had never faced. Even then his work was far from finished. At the close of his life he entrusted to his destined successor, Tiberius, a series of documents to be made public after his death. Amongst these was a record of his achievements—*res gestae divi Augusti*—which was inscribed on two pillars of bronze at the entrance of his mausoleum. It is almost wholly preserved to us in the copy engraved upon the walls of a temple erected in his honour at Ancyra in Galatia. But neither this document—which is proved by internal evidence to have been composed at intervals of several years—nor the political testament which laid down principles for the guidance of his successor disclosed the whole mind of Augustus, who preferred to leave

unspoken the words which would have revealed the silent revolution in process of accomplishment.

The Roman Empire embraced a congeries of cities, peoples, and territories bound to Rome by diverse ties and enjoying various degrees of autonomy. In the East, kings and potentates who were permitted to style themselves "friends of the Roman people" ruled over what in modern parlance would be named "protected" states, and hundreds of Greek cities, old and new, retained constitutional government moulded to an oligarchic type under Roman influence, whether as allies or as subjects of Rome. In the West—save where Carthage (or the more adventurous of the Greek colonists) had planted cities—Rome had to deal with tribes of Celtic, Teutonic, Iberian, and other stocks, to whom she had to teach her language as well as the principles of city life. But amid all this external diversity there remained the essential fact—the absolute supremacy of the Italian race. And all the threads of government were gathered together and centred in the city of Rome, where the supreme power had just passed from a narrow aristocracy into the hands of a single ruler, himself a representative of the ruling caste. Now, so far as he gave utterance to his thought, Augustus professed to maintain inviolate both the supremacy of the Italians and the concentration of the higher functions of government in the hands of the senatorial oligarchy. As we shall see, he spared no pains to build up and to foster a specifically Roman sentiment of patriotism, restoring where he could the mythical and historical traditions and the

religious and social observances of Rome's past. He professed, moreover, an anxiety to preserve the purity of the ruling race; he was sparing in his grants of citizenship, and limited the rights of slave-owners to bestow freedom on their slaves, and in his political testament adjured his successor to maintain this policy. In this respect, as in so many others, his rule marks a reaction against that of Julius Cæsar. And yet we cannot doubt that to his farseeing eye there was revealed the vision of that unified Empire whose subjects were all citizens of Rome—the Empire whose poet could sing—

"*Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat.*"

We shall see that the gradual absorption of client-kingdoms into the Empire was begun by Augustus; and if the Romanisation of the provinces—or at any rate the extension of citizen rights to the provincials—did not make as rapid progress in his reign as in those of several of his successors, this was because he judged that an education in Roman sentiment and traditions must precede admission to the citizenship of the Empire. Many colonies of time-expired soldiers were, however, planted in the provinces as outposts of Roman life; and above all it is to be remembered that, although the legions were almost wholly recruited from the citizen body,[1] one half of the army was composed of "auxiliary" troops drawn from the more vigorous of the subject nations, who on the completion of their term of service under

[1] Non-citizens received full rights on enlistment.

Roman discipline received the rights of citizenship together with their families, and were thus absorbed into the ruling race.

We should likewise greatly err in supposing that Augustus regarded the senatorial aristocracy as capable of administering the Empire. Here, above all, it behoved him to move warily. Augustus desired to enlist all classes, especially the highest, in the service of his government. This meant that the great Republican offices and the highest military commands must be reserved for senators; even a few fresh administrative posts were created, which formed a part of the senatorial career, and the dignities of senatorial rank were enhanced. There was actually a short period during which the governors of Asia and Africa were permitted to stamp coins with their own effigy. But with all this the reins of government was gradually withdrawn from the hands of the Senate. Personal service to a superior the senator was not schooled to render, though military subordination was of course understood, and it was thus possible to govern the Imperial provinces through the Emperor's "lieutenants" (*legati*).[1] But the due administration of the affairs of empire demanded an organised service dependent on the Emperor; and this was gradually and silently built up by Augustus, who must have been fully conscious that under his successors its

[1] This system was due to Julius Cæsar. One of its most important consequences was that the honours of the triumph and the *salutatio imperatoria* (which conferred the title *imperator*) were reserved for the Emperor and his co-regents, as the sole possessors of true *imperium*.

power would continually increase at the expense of that of the Senate.

Thus Augustus laid the foundations of a new Rome whose mighty superstructure was to envelop without destroying the old. But he was not only keenly alive to the need of time and caution in carrying out reforms; he was also hampered by the pressure of external problems. The victory of Actium left him master of some fifty legions. The maintenance of these armaments was a burden too heavy for Italy and the provinces, which had for years been groaning beneath extraordinary taxation. Augustus' first step was to reduce his army to a peace footing, and to provide for the discharged soldiers, not as the triumvirs—himself amongst them—had done some years before, by confiscation, but by wholesale purchases of land. Italy breathed again, since not only lasting peace, but also a speedy recovery from economic exhaustion was assured, and Augustus was greeted as the saviour of society. Yet he had missed a great opportunity. The Empire was, it is true, secured from the menace of invasion on its Southern and Western frontiers by the barriers of the desert and the ocean: but in the North and East the problem of defence was not so simple of solution. Within the great re-entrant angle of the Rhine and Danube there seethed in ceaseless ferment the tribes of Germany, whose advancing tide was one day to submerge the Empire: and in the East the Parthian kingdom opposed to Rome a power which had hitherto brought disaster to every attacking force. In the

burning abyss of the Mesopotamian desert lay the bones of Crassus and his legions, whose eagles adorned the Parthian capital; and the soldiers of the Eastern legions, whose allegiance had been transferred to Augustus, could tell of the horrors of Antony's retreat from Praaspa four years before. Had Augustus determined to use the overwhelming force at his disposal in order to assert the supremacy of the Roman arms and settle the vexed question of the frontiers once and for all, a century of bloodshed and failure might have been spared. But although his personal courage has been unjustly impugned, he was not a soldier; and he decided to leave the regulation of the Eastern frontier to diplomacy, and of the Northern to time. The number of the legions was reduced, probably to eighteen.[1] It should be remembered that the legion itself was roughly equivalent to the modern brigade; but as it was always supplemented by its complement of "auxiliary" cavalry and infantry, about equal to it in strength, it may be counted as a division in estimating the garrisons of the Empire. It is difficult to be sure of the distribution of these forces at the commencement of Augustus' reign, but it seems to have been somewhat as follows: four legions—the equivalent of two army corps—were stationed in Syria to guard the Eastern frontier; six—or three army corps—in the Balkans and the Austrian Alps, in preparation for an advance to the line of the Danube; three on the Rhine,

[1] This is Mommsen's view, but some hold that the legions never numbered less than twenty-two.

and three in Northern Spain, where the untameable forefathers of the Basques held their own in the mountains of the Asturias and Biscay. A single legion stationed in Numidia sufficed to hold the Berbers in check; another formed the army of occupation in Augustus' kingdom of Egypt. The total force seems a small one to garrison so great an empire, and we shall see that Augustus was forced to increase it by almost one-half during his reign. But it must be remembered that the rulers of the protected states were obliged to furnish contingents for Imperial service. Thus the line of the Upper Euphrates was held for Rome by the vassal kings of Cappadocia and Commagene; while on the death of Amyntas, King of Galatia, in B.C. 25, his fine troops were transferred by Augustus to Egypt, and thirty-four years later were honoured by enrolment in the Imperial army as the Twenty-second Legion.

Such was the standing army which under Augustus replaced the mercenary army of the civil wars, itself the successor of the citizen army of the Republic. But the military spirit which had made that army invincible was no longer to be found in Italy. To the Italians, indeed, Augustus reserved the privilege of serving in the nine regiments of household troops known as the "prætorian cohorts,"[1] and they were no doubt preferred as legionaries: but their aversion from active service grew so rapidly that under the

[1] This privilege was for a time confined to the inhabitants of Central Italy, but as early as the reign of Claudius we hear of Alpine tribes represented amongst the prætorians.

Flavian dynasty they ceased to enrol themselves in the legions. Even more remarkable is the distaste for the military career shown by the higher classes of society. It was the intention of Augustus that every member of the senatorial and equestrian orders should serve as a subaltern in the legions or auxiliaries as the prelude to his career; but this service rarely exceeded a year in length, and was sometimes dispensed with altogether. Yet after several years of civil life the senator was thought fit to assume the command of a legion, or even of a whole army corps, as *legatus*, when he had held the praetorship. Thus the efficiency of the Imperial army depended in part on the innate capacity for leadership which still distinguished the Roman aristocracy, but even more on the incomparable discipline maintained by the non-commissioned officers. The military traditions of Rome were kept alive by the centurions, who were largely drawn from the highest class in the country towns of Italy—the healthiest element in the population of the Empire. The Imperial fleet was of small importance. Piracy had been crushed and the enemies of Rome possessed no naval power. Augustus created two squadrons, manned by non-Romans and commanded by freedmen, whose headquarters were at Ravenna and Misenum. After a time the heavier battleship, the trireme, was disused, and the "Liburnian" galley was alone retained.

The course of Augustus' work of reconstruction cannot be traced in detail, but the sequence of events reveals certain landmarks. In the first half of

Augustus' reign he spent several years in the provinces, returning to Rome at intervals. These visits were always marked by some significant act, ceremony, or group of reforms. We saw that the years 29–27 B.C. were spent in laying the foundations of government. The census of 28 B.C. was of importance in two respects. In the first place, the strict hierarchy of classes which was a fundamental principle of the Empire was now established. As censor, Augustus revised not only the roll of the Senate, but also that of the equestrian order. This body drew its name from the fact that its property qualification was the same as that of the *equites*, once the citizen cavalry of the Republic; but in the period of the civil wars the term denoted the wealthy commercial class outside the Senate, whose riches were largely drawn from the farming of the public taxes. Augustus completely transformed this order, and made of it an Imperial service, half civil and half military, admission to which lay with the Emperor. As the senator's toga was marked by a broad stripe of purple, so was that of the knight by a narrower band. This was worn by senators' sons of right, and also by those to whom the Emperor granted the "public horse." The whole body of knights was reviewed as a cavalry force on the 15th of July; the procession started from the temple of Mars without the walls, passed the Emperor by that of Castor and Pollux at the entrance of the Forum, and proceeded to the Capitol. The knight's career began with service as a subaltern officer; after this, as a general rule, a choice was made between

the military and civil branches of the service. The soldier knight who was favoured by fortune and connections might become an officer in the guards; otherwise he would hold minor independent commands in the Imperial provinces with the title of *praefectus*, and come in time to administer a territory of the second rank, such as the annexed kingdoms of Noricum or Mauretania. The civilian entered the service of the Imperial house or treasury as an "agent" (*procurator*), and, advancing from post to post, ultimately became qualified—as well as the *praefectus*—for the prizes of the profession, which by the end of Augustus' reign were four in number—namely, the command of the guards, the viceroyalty of Egypt, the administration of the corn supply of Rome, and the command of the *vigiles*, the fire brigade and night-watchmen of the capital. The equestrian services, created by Augustus and wholly dependent upon him, formed the mainstay of the Imperial Government, and enabled the Emperor to remove the control of administration from the Senate without offending its pride. Moreover, as the ranks of the Senate were thinned by the extinction of the older families, the order was reinforced by the knights whose devotion to the Imperial house was unquestioned, and an aristocracy reconciled to despotism was thus created. The knights in turn were recruited from the *plebs* or third estate, and the *carrière ouverte aux talents*, which autocracy employs as its most alluring bait, was opened to all grades of society.

The census, too, gave Augustus an opportunity of

reviewing and reorganising the finances of the state. This was, indeed, the work of many years, but Augustus' principle was clearly laid down from the first. The financial administration of the Republic had been sadly lacking in system, and the charge of the treasury had been committed to the *quaestors*, young men just entering on their official career, who were in the hands of the permanent clerks. Augustus did not abolish the old treasury, or *aerarium*, housed in the vaults of the temple of Saturn under the Capitol, but he transferred its management to senators of prætorian rank. Its revenues were, however, unimportant in comparison with those which flowed in from the Imperial provinces and from the public domains—above all, from the kingdom of Egypt. All these were at the disposal of the Emperor, who defrayed the expense of the army and most of the public services.

Now all the great families of Rome were banking and mercantile houses, whose agents might be found in every province of the Empire, and the Imperial house was merely the greatest of these. Augustus had, of course, vast private possessions, which were constantly increased by purchases, legacies, and confiscations, and these were managed by a whole army of *procuratores*, while the accounts were kept in Rome by a staff of slaves and freedmen. When it became his duty to "place the Empire on a business footing," he simply brought the public revenues under the same management, selecting his agents, as we saw, from the equestrian order. There was no breach with the Republican constitution, but the *fact* was

that the Imperial house had become a Ministry of Finance. More than this, Augustus determined to carry out a statistical survey of the Empire and its resources. The evidence shows that this survey — which seems to have begun in Gaul in 27 B.C. — was prolonged for many years, and was extended to the dependent kingdoms, such as that of Herod in Judæa, and also that reassessments were made at intervals of fourteen years. Here, as in much else, Augustus seems to have learnt from the scientific system of taxation elaborated by the Ptolemies in Egypt.

After the constitutional settlement of B.C. 27 Augustus was free to visit the Western provinces in which he had never set foot. In Gaul the revenue settlement was commenced. In Spain, however, the first necessity was to subdue the obstinate resistance of the Northern mountaineers. There was little glory to be won in the *guerrilla* warfare which constantly broke out in fresh centres, and Augustus' health suffered from the fatigues of the campaign. In B.C. 24 peace was for a time restored, and Augustus returned to Rome.

In the following year, as was explained above, the constitution of the principate received its final shape; but Augustus received the first stroke of the ill-fortune which was to beset his family and dynasty. His only child was a daughter, Julia, born in B.C. 39. He had married her mother, Scribonia, for purely political reasons, and divorced her on the day of her daughter's birth. In the following year he married Livia, widow of Ti. Claudius Nero, who brought him

one stepson, Tiberius, and in a few months' time became the mother of a second, Drusus. Augustus was, moreover, bound by the ties of blood to the children of his sister Octavia, who had been twice married, first to M. Claudius Marcellus and then to Antony. By each husband she had two daughters, and by the first a son also. The elder Marcella was married to Agrippa, who, though not as yet formally associated with Augustus in the powers of government, acted as regent in the Emperor's absence. But Augustus' hopes were centred in the young Marcellus, whom he caused to marry his cousin Julia in B.C. 25. Marcellus was the darling of the Roman populace, and no one could doubt that Augustus destined him to be his successor. In B.C. 24, when he was nineteen years of age, he was admitted to the Senate, and leave was granted him to anticipate by ten years the normal succession of public offices. In B.C. 23, as ædile, he charmed the populace by splendid shows and set up awnings to shade the Forum throughout the heats of summer. But when Augustus fell ill and believed himself to be at the point of death, he gave his signet-ring to Agrippa as the only man who could reckon on the obedience of the legions. Augustus recovered, heard tales of bitter rivalry between Agrippa and Marcellus, and sent the elder man on a mission to the Eastern provinces. Then the blow fell. Towards the close of the year Marcellus sickened and died, to be rendered immortal by Vergil in the finest lines ever inspired by untimely death.

When the shock was over Augustus determined to

divorce Agrippa from his niece and give him in marriage to his daughter. Yet, although he ignored human feeling when dynastic alliances were in question, he would perhaps have deferred the step but for the fact that when he left Rome for the East in B.C. 22 serious tumults arose in the city. The restoration of senatorial government seemed almost a reality. For the first time Augustus was not among the consuls, and the censorship had been restored after many years. This provoked a counter-movement amongst the populace, who besieged the Senate-house and demanded the dictatorship for Augustus. He was forced to return, and quieted the mob by assuming the *cura annonae*, or administration of the corn supply of Rome. Agrippa was recalled and married to Julia, and Augustus set out to deal with the Eastern question.

Negotiations were already on foot which promised a settlement of the affair of honour between Rome and Parthia. The Parthian king, Prahates, demanded the surrender of his rival, Tiridates, who had taken refuge with Augustus and held Prahates' infant son as a hostage. Augustus stipulated for the restoration of the Roman standards and captives in return for the child, and in B.C. 20 the transaction was completed. The court poets celebrated the bargain as a conspicuous triumph, and the Prima Porta statue of Augustus (Plate, p. 23) displays the delivery of the standards amid the chasings of its corslet.

In the government of the East Rome had made large use of the system of vassal-kingdoms, and Antony, reigning in Egypt as consort of Cleopatra,

had dreamt of an Eastern Empire which he should rule as "King of kings." Augustus, as he recalls in the record of his acts, recovered the East from its potentates. Yet the system seemed to him worth preserving, at least for a time. Two of Antony's vassals, Amyntas of Galatia and Herod of Judæa, were left in the enjoyment of their sovereignties; in B.C. 25, however, Amyntas died and Galatia became a province. Now Augustus had to face the question of the upper Euphrates frontier and the relations of the Empire with Armenia, whose position between Rome and Parthia has often been compared with that of Afghanistan at the present time. He was not prepared to take the responsibility of annexing the country, a course which would have rendered a large increase in the military establishment necessary; on the other hand, it was unsafe to leave Armenia under the dominant Parthian influence. He took the line of least resistance and established client kings in Cappadocia and Commagene to cover the Anatolian provinces and watch the line of the Euphrates, while Tiberius (now just twenty-one years of age) began his military career by leading an army into Armenia and setting on the throne Tigranes, a brother of the reigning king, Artaxes, who was murdered on the approach of the legions. Tigranes had been brought up in Rome, and Augustus hoped much from the plan of educating princes who should introduce Roman civilisation and methods of government into the protected states and pave the way for eventual annexation. Some years later Phrahates of Parthia was induced to send four sons with their families to

Photo] [*R. Moscioni.*

AUGUSTUS—THE PRIMA PORTA STATUE.

(*Vatican.*)

live in Rome, and the children of Cotys, vassal-king of Thrace, whose wife, Antonia Tryphæna, was descended from Antony, were brought up in the house of Antonia, daughter of the triumvir by Octavia and wife of Drusus.

The "conquest of Armenia," as it was officially termed, was regarded as a triumph only second to the recovery of the standards, and in B.C. 19 Augustus returned to Rome in a blaze of glory, dimmed only by the death of Vergil on landing in Italy in the Emperor's train. In the following year Augustus' constitutional powers were renewed, and Agrippa was confirmed as co-regent, while in B.C. 17 the return of the Golden Age, which had become a commonplace in the mouths of the court poets, was celebrated by the pageant of the Secular Games. All the learning and ingenuity of the Roman theologians were expended to make the ceremonies worthy of the great occasion. The mysterious rites performed at dead of night in honour of the infernal gods alternated with daily processions from the Palatine, where Augustus dwelt under the protection of his guardian deities, Apollo and Diana, to the Capitol, where Jupiter, Best and Greatest, with Juno and Minerva, patrons of Rome since the days of the Etruscan kings, were worshipped as the equals, but not the superiors, of the divinities of the Imperial house.

In B.C. 16 both rulers left Rome. Agrippa had work to do in the East. Augustus felt that the time had come to attack the problem of the Northern frontiers, the more so as German tribes had burst the barrier of the Rhine, cut to pieces a legion, and

captured its eagle. He was no general, but his step-sons were of the true Roman stuff and carried out the task assigned to them with brilliant success. Not only were the Alpine tribes of the Italian slope pacified once and for all, but a converging movement executed by Tiberius from the Rhone valley and by Drusus from that of the Adige made the Romans masters of Switzerland and the Tyrol.

There was a brief pause in B.C. 13, when Augustus, who had been occupied mainly in the purchase of lands for the settlement of the time-expired veterans enlisted after Actium, returned to Rome. The Senate decreed the erection of an altar to *Pax Augusta*, which was consecrated four years later. Its remains, partly scattered in the museums of Italy and France, partly hidden under a Roman palace, show it to have been the crowning achievement of Augustan art (Plate, p. 27).

In B.C. 12, however, the peace was again broken. Tiberius, commanding the armies of the Illyrian provinces, pushed forward the frontier to the upper Danube, while Piso formed the province of Mœsia between the Balkans and the lower Danube. Meanwhile Drusus sailed down the Rhine into the North Sea, regulating the course of the river and connecting it by a canal with the Zuyder Zee, and then carried the Roman arms, first to the line of the Weser and then to that of the Elbe. Then Augustus once again felt the finger of fate. At the height of his glory, Drusus died on his return from the Elbe. Tiberius hastened to Cologne, and thence walked on foot to Rome beside the corpse of his beloved brother.

He was now the first man in the state (after Augustus) and its only general, since Agrippa had died in B.C. 12; but the iron had already entered into his soul. For in B.C. 11 Augustus, seeing that Julia's sons by Agrippa were too young to claim the succession in the event of his death, had forced Tiberius to divorce Agrippa's daughter, whom he dearly loved, and to marry Agrippa's widow, whom he justly loathed. It was small consolation to him that in B.C. 8 he was associated with Augustus as co-regent, and he may have been glad to spend the next two years in strengthening the hold of Rome on the districts beyond the Rhine.

In B.C. 8 Augustus held a second census, and seems about this time to have elaborated many administrative reforms in Rome and Italy. Rome was divided, for police purposes, into fourteen "regions," and Italy into eleven. According to the historian Cassius Dio, Augustus now extended the limits of the *pomerium*, *i.e.*, the sacred boundary of the city, on crossing which the military commander laid aside the emblems of his power; but the truth of this statement is doubtful. The course of the Tiber was regulated, the calendar was reformed, and the sixth month of the old year (Sextilis) was renamed Augustus.[1] It is important, moreover, to note the growth of the popular conception of divinity attaching to the Emperor and the skilful use to which it was put by Augustus. After the victory of Actium temples had been erected to Augustus, in conjunction with the

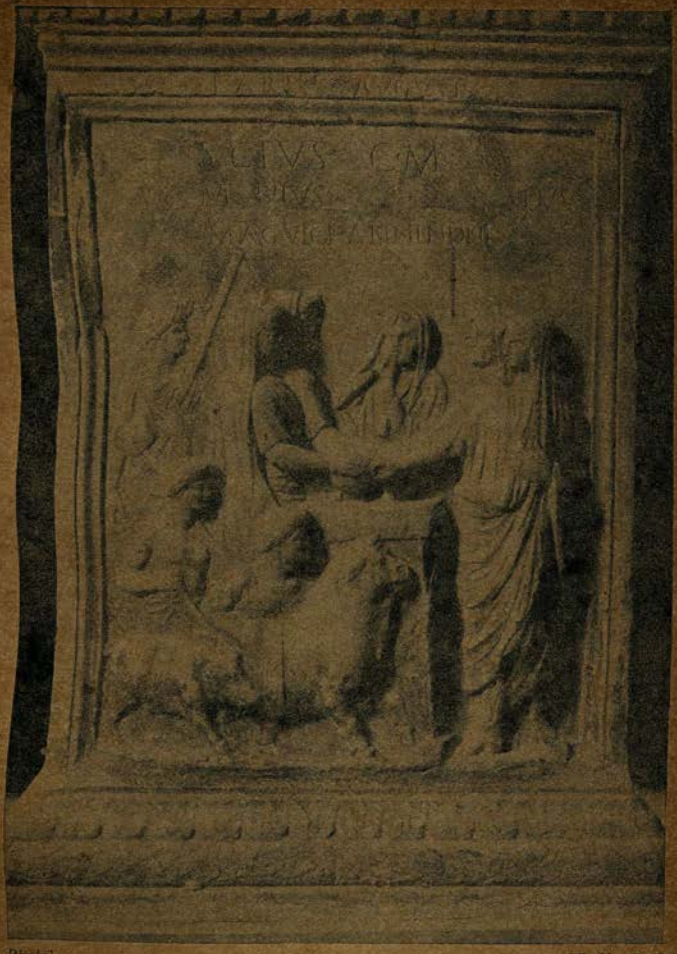
[1] The early Roman year began with March.

RELIEFS FROM THE ARA PACIS AUGUSTÆ

goddess "Roma," in the Greek East. This was no new thing; the practice dates back to the time of Flamininus. But Augustus saw that this worship might be made the symbol of an Imperial patriotism embracing all the subject peoples, and provincial diets (*concilia*) were formed in the West on the model of those already existing in the East (κοινά), whose chief function was to practise the new cult. Augustus professed to forbid the worship of himself in Rome and Italy, in order to mark the distinction of the ruling race. But in fact there sprang up in many of the country towns, especially those of Campania, settled partly by Greeks and partly by veterans, a regular cult of the Emperor. At Cumæ, for instance, there was a sacred year, whose holy days commemorated events in the life of Augustus. After B.C. 12 we hear of "Augustales"[1] as priests of this worship, and the office was used (hardly without encouragement from the government) as a means of satisfying the ambition of an important class, the wealthy freedmen, who were debarred from municipal office by their servile origin. In Rome there was no direct worship of Augustus, but every "region" contained a number of "wards" (*vici*), whose inhabitants united in the worship of the Lares[2] *coupled with the* "genius" *of the Emperor*, who took the place of the genius of the *vicus*. Thus a double end was attained: the humble plebeian had an object of aspiration in the

[1] Also *Seviri Augustales*.

[2] The worship of the Lares at the cross roads of the *vici* was of old standing.



Photo] *[R. Moscioni.*

ALTAR DEDICATED TO THE LARES OF AUGUSTUS
BY THE MAGISTRI VICORUM.

(*Capitol.*)

priesthood of the *vicus*, and the *plebs* was confirmed in its devotion to the ruling house.

In the year of his second census Augustus lost his trusted friend and adviser Mæcenas. His tact and *finesse* in diplomacy had stood Augustus in good stead during the years of the triumvirate; under the principate he figured in the eye of the world as the patron of poets and director of the literary movement of the time. What part he may have played as the power behind the throne we can only guess. In the same year Horace died, and the sun of Augustan poetry set.

In the following years Augustus' thoughts were again turned towards the question of the succession. His hopes were centred in his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius Cæsar, the elder children of Agrippa by Julia, whom he had adopted as his own sons in B.C. 17. Although Tiberius shared the command of the army with Augustus and was therefore permitted in B.C. 7 to celebrate a triumph in honour of his successes on the Rhine—an honour now reserved for the Imperial house—he had never been adopted into the Julian house, and it was clear that Augustus intended to postpone his claims to those of his own descendants. When, therefore, in B.C. 6, Tiberius received, together with the *tribunicia potestas*, a commission to regulate the affairs of the East, where the settlement effected in Armenia in B.C. 20 had broken down, he treated Augustus' decree as one of virtual banishment, and spent the following years in retirement at Rhodes. Meantime the young Cæsars were pushed rapidly forward. They became

principes iuventutis—chief of the youth of Rome—and as such rode at the head of the knights in the yearly cavalcade. Augustus himself held the consulship in B.C. 5 and B.C. 2 in order to introduce them successively to public life in their fifteenth year, and they were designated for the consulship when they should reach the age of twenty.

In B.C. 2 Augustus received the crowning honour of the title *Pater patriae*—Father of the Fatherland—which the Senate conferred upon him on the proposal of M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, whose boast it was that he had fought beside Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. The reconciliation of the aristocracy with the principate was sealed. But in the same year the tide of fortune turned again. The first blow was struck when Augustus' eyes were suddenly opened—by Livia, as it was said—to the grave scandal of Julia's life, which had helped to drive Tiberius into banishment. Her offence was the more unpardonable in Augustus' eyes because it was his wish to be regarded as a moral reformer, and he had endeavoured by legislation to enforce the duty and uphold the sanctity of marriage. Julia's lovers were exiled, except one, Iullus Antonius, the son of Antony, who was put to death on a charge of treasonable conspiracy, and she herself was confined on the barren island of Pantelleria.

But the mother's disgrace was no check to the rising fortunes of her sons. In B.C. 1 Gaius Cæsar was invested with proconsular power, although his consulship had been fixed for the following year, and despatched as vice-regent to the Eastern pro-

vinces, where kings and cities vied in adulation. Tiberius was forced to leave Rhodes and wait upon his stepson, who received him with scant courtesy. The climax of Gaius's progress was reached when on an island in the Euphrates he was met by the young King of Parthia, Prahates II., who agreed to recognise the candidate put forward by Rome for the throne of Armenia, Ariobarzanes of Media. This took place in A.D. 2. But in the same year his younger brother, while on his way to take command of the army in Spain, died suddenly at Marseilles; and in the following year Gaius was treacherously wounded while besieging an Armenian fortress. His health and spirits gave way, and he begged Augustus for leave to abandon the splendid career which was opening before him and retire into seclusion. With a heavy heart Augustus recalled him to Italy, but he never saw its shores. On February 21, A.D. 4, he died at Limyra, a small haven on the Lycian coast.

There were not wanting malicious tongues to whisper that the hand of Livia had been at work in this, as in the other calamities which had befallen Augustus' kindred. It was hinted that Marcellus and the two Cæsars had been poisoned by her orders, in order that a son of her own might one day ascend the throne. These rumours are unworthy of credence; but the end for which she must have hoped in silence was attained. Tiberius, who had been permitted to return to Rome in A.D. 2 as a private citizen—his *tribunicia potestas* had expired—was marked out as the inevitable successor of

Augustus. There remained, indeed, one son of Julia, born after his father's death in B.C. 12, and named Agrippa Postumus. But he showed no promise of intellectual ability or force of character. Augustus, however, bowed to the inevitable and adopted both Tiberius and Agrippa, although Tiberius alone received the *tribunicia potestas*. Tiberius in his turn was called upon to adopt his nephew Germanicus, who was now nineteen years of age; his own son Drusus was two years younger. A year later Germanicus was married to Agrippina, the younger of Julia's two daughters. Thus Augustus, though baulked of his cherished hopes, once more placed the dynastic succession on a firm basis. But the troubles of his household were not even yet at an end. The conduct of Agrippa Postumus soon made it necessary for Augustus to banish him to the small island of Planasia (near Elba), and Agrippina's elder sister, the younger Julia, who was married to L. Æmilius Paulus, renewed the scandal of her mother's career and was involved in a like disgrace.

Nor was it only in his private affairs that Augustus met with disappointment and disaster. The latter years of his reign were clouded by the first great military check sustained by the conquering advance of Rome in the North. Tiberius was before all things a soldier, and he had no sooner been associated as co-regent with Augustus than he assumed the command of the Rhine army and recommenced the forward movement which had been suspended since his retirement in B.C. 6. In A.D. 5 the North

Sea fleet sailed to the northern promontory of Jutland, possibly even to the mouth of the Baltic, and returning thence to the Elbe, met the advancing legions of Tiberius. But the crowning movement was fixed for the following year. The campaigns of Drusus had driven the Marcomanni from the banks of the Main to seek a new home in Bohemia, whence they drove out the Celtic inhabitants. Under their king, Marbod, who strove to lead his people in the paths of civilisation and organised life, they became the dominant power throughout free Germany, and a *point d'appui* for resistance to the advance of Rome. It was determined therefore that the new power should be crushed and a continuous frontier from the Elbe to the Danube established. Bohemia is girt by a lozenge-shaped quadrilateral of mountain ranges, pierced at the acute angles of the northern and southern corners by the Elbe and the March. At the junction of the March with the Danube lay Carnuntum, where six legions were concentrated under Tiberius. C. Sentius Saturninus commanded the army of the Rhine, which likewise numbered six legions, but as an advance up the Elbe valley was impossible, owing to its distance from the Roman base, he was ordered to invade Bohemia from the West by the valley of the Main and the Hercynian Forest.

It seems likely, though not quite certain, that in view of this forward policy the military establishment was largely increased, possibly by as many as eight legions (numbered xiii–xx). At the same time the legionary's term of service was raised from sixteen to

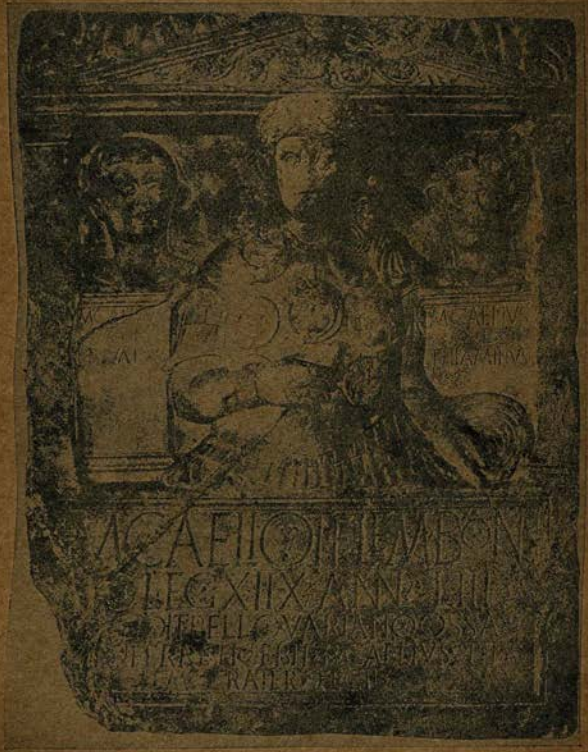
twenty, that of the prætorian from twelve to sixteen years; but in order to provide pensions and gratuities for the time-expired men a new military treasury (*aerarium militare*) was called into being. Augustus endowed it with 170,000,000 sesterces (nearly £1,700,000), and induced the Senate to impose a 5 per cent. succession duty and a tax of 1 per cent. on goods sold by auction, in order to furnish it with revenues. Direct taxation was so unpopular with the Romans that he was obliged to justify the imposition of the succession duty by appealing to the papers of Julius Cæsar.

But before Tiberius and Saturninus had effected the junction of their forces, the Illyrian provinces, Pannonia and Dalmatia, burst into a blaze of revolt in Tiberius' rear. In a few weeks' time a force of 200,000 foot and 9,000 horse was in arms, which harried the centres of Roman occupation with fire and sword, invaded the province of Macedonia, and, what was worse, threatened to invade Italy by way of Laybach and Trieste. Augustus met the Senate with the news that in ten days the enemy, if unchecked, might be at the gates of Rome. Levies were hastily raised and placed under the command of the young Germanicus, while the legions of the lower Danube and even of the further East hurried to Tiberius' aid. A catastrophe was averted, but three years of fighting were needed before the revolt was subdued, and all thought of the annexation of Bohemia was given up.

Then came the crowning disaster. The armies of the Rhine were now commanded by Quinc-

tilius Varus, who, as the husband of a great-niece of Augustus, stood high in the favour of the court. As governor of Syria, men said, he had made himself rich instead of poor, and his province poor instead of rich. He was now called upon to reduce Northern Germany, from the Rhine to the Elbe, to the condition of a province. But the Germans felt that the time had come to strike a blow for freedom. Arminius, prince of the Cherusci, who had received Roman citizenship and served in the cavalry, plotted the insurrection and lulled Varus into security by protestations of loyalty. Suddenly, as Varus was returning from a punitive expedition through the forests and marshes of Westphalia, his force of three legions was surrounded, and after three days of fruitless efforts to break through was cut to pieces.

The loss of three eagles was a terrible blow to Roman pride, but the danger of an offensive movement from Germany was small, since Marbod refused to join his forces with those of Arminius. The three legions lost by Varus were never reconstituted, but the rabble of Rome were forced to enrol themselves, and in A.D. 10 Tiberius was able to concentrate eight legions on the Rhine. He took with him his nephew Germanicus, and when he returned to Rome in A.D. 13, left him in command. But though his legions crossed the river, there was no attempt at reconquest. Augustus' spirit was broken. The bitter cry, "Varus, Varus, give me back my legions!" was wrung from his lips, and he bequeathed to his successor the injunction that the boundaries of the



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TOMBSTONE OF CENTURION OF EIGHTEENTH LEGION BELONGING TO THE FORCE DESTROYED WITH VARUS.

Empire should not be extended. In the East as well as in the West the last years of his reign were clouded with failure. In A.D. 7 a prince educated in Rome ascended the throne of Parthia, but in a few years' time he was ignominiously expelled, and his attempt to hold Armenia as a Roman vassal likewise failed. Beyond the Euphrates Roman influence had ceased to exist.

Augustus' long reign was now drawing to its close. In A.D. 9 a law bearing the names of the consuls, Papius and Poppæus, gave final shape to the system of rewards and punishments devised by Augustus for the discouragement of celibacy and "race suicide." By the irony of circumstance, the consuls were themselves unmarried, and the futility of unpopular legislation which it had cost Augustus thirty-seven years of struggle and compromise to pass in the teeth of public sentiment was displayed. In A.D. 12 Tiberius celebrated his triumph over the Illyrian insurgents, which had been delayed by the disaster of Varus, and in the following year, when Augustus' powers were renewed for the last time, he was granted the tribunician power for life and equality with the Emperor in the command of the army. On the 3rd of April Augustus solemnly deposited his last will and testament in the keeping of the Vestal Virgins.

The last year of his life was occupied with a third census and revision of the senatorial roll. The number of Roman citizens was returned at 4,937,000, an increase of almost 900,000 during the reign. The closing ceremony of the *lustrum* took place on

May 11, 14 A.D. When all was ready for the sacrifice, an eagle was seen to approach the tomb of Agrippa and alight on the initial letter of his name. Augustus accepted the omen as signifying that his days were numbered and bade Tiberius utter the words of invocation.

A week later—after the last lines had been added to the record preserved in the Ancyran monument—he set out with Tiberius for Beneventum, whence Tiberius proceeded to assume the command in Illyricum, while Augustus returned to Campania. Here he was seized with dysentery, and barely found strength to reach the house which had been his father's at Nola. Tiberius was recalled in haste, and it was officially announced that he had been in time to receive the last counsels of his stepfather. The truth of this account, however, was doubted. We may at least believe that his self-control did not desert him in the hour of death. He called his friends to witness that he had "played out life's drama well," and met the painless death he had hoped for in Livia's arms, August 19, A.D. 14.

The body of Augustus was borne from town to town along the Appian Way by the municipal senators till at Bovillæ, the cradle of the Julian house, it was met by the representatives of the equestrian order, headed by Claudius, the brother of Germanicus, and by them carried to Rome. Tiberius then summoned the Senate, before which body Augustus' will, his directions for his burial, and the other documents in which he had drawn up his political testament, were read. His body was then burned in

the Campus Martius and his ashes laid in the mausoleum which he had built forty years before. From the funeral pyre an imprisoned eagle was released, and soared to the skies as a visible token that Augustus was numbered with the gods.

The verdict of history on the founder of the Empire has varied according to the political temper of succeeding ages. With such judgments we are not concerned; but the contrast between the ruthless severity of the triumvir and the mild rule of the *princeps* presents a problem for which Seneca found a famous solution in the indignant exclamation, "I will not call exhausted cruelty by the name of clemency." It is true enough that the proscriptions of B.C. 43 rank with the great crimes of history, and Augustus must bear his share in the responsibility therefor. But he was a youth scarcely out of his teens, forced by the murder of his adoptive father to play a desperate game in which his opponents were men twice as old as himself, without pity or scruple, the stake was the world's empire, and a false move meant destruction. He played the game as they played it, and won. But when the prize was his, he showed that it was not for the gratification of a monstrous selfishness that he had desired to be a ruler of men, but for the completion of the herculean labours which the Dictator had left unfinished.

The significance and system of his government have only been revealed by the labours of Mommsen and his school during the past fifty years. Before the great collection of documents in stone known as the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* was ordered

and digested, before Roman constitutional law had been reduced to a science, the evidence for a just estimate of Augustus was lacking. It is now possible to frame a conception of the system which he created, in its strength and in its weakness, which need fear no revision in essentials. We cannot withhold our assent from the criticism passed upon it by Otto Hirschfeld, who writes as follows in concluding his study of the Imperial bureaucracy: "Though fully recognising his endeavours, we cannot acquit Augustus of having cherished aims impossible of attainment and created a system incapable of permanence; for he seriously overrated the capacity of the two pillars of his constitution, the *princeps* and the Senate. He had hoped for the salvation of the state from the harmonious co-operation of these two factors, and as the Senate refused its aid and the Emperors proved incapable of fulfilling their duties and respecting the limits laid down for the Imperial power, the transformation of the constitutional principate into a naked military despotism was bound to follow."

How this transformation was effected it will be the task of the succeeding chapters to show. It is likely enough that when Augustus, weary and disillusioned, laid down the burden of life and Empire, he had come to realise the future that awaited his system, and to feel that his achievement consisted in giving to a world which knew no government worthy of the name "the government which it deserved." But he kept his secret well, and bequeathed to the world a political testament written in language befitting the first citizen of a free Republic.

II

THE JULIO-CLAUDIAN DYNASTY

THE dynasty which Augustus had founded, in fact though not in name, occupied the throne for fifty-four years after his death. The four Emperors who succeeded him have been branded in the eyes of posterity as a tyrant, a madman, a fool, and a monster; and these conceptions have stamped themselves almost indelibly upon the minds of men, since the portraits are due to the master-hand of Tacitus. But Tacitus, though a great artist and a great psychologist, was not amongst the greatest of historians, for in spite of his professed intention of telling the truth without fear or favour, he was filled, not with the passion for seeing things as they are, but with devotion to a lost cause. He tells us, it is true, that "Nerva has reconciled the irreconcilable, and made monarchy compatible with freedom," but his real mind is revealed in the advice to "pray for good Emperors and submit to any"; and in drawing his terrible indictment against the Cæsars he gives utterance to the vindictive passion of that aristocracy which, having learnt nothing, forgotten nothing, and

forgiven nothing, repaid its exclusion from the guidance of Imperial policy with undying hatred. Thus it is that his narrative presents to the student of character a series of almost insoluble problems, while it obscures the true play of forces which were slowly and silently shaping the Empire and creating a new nationality.

Although the principate was not hereditary, Augustus had been careful to bridge the gap which his death would leave by conferring on Tiberius the essentials of authority in the proconsular *imperium* and the tribunician power. The former made him commander-in-chief of the army, and the military oath (*sacramentum*) was forthwith administered to the troops in his name, while the latter enabled him to convoke the Senate and preside at its counsels. With consummate statecraft he treated the question of the succession as an open one, in order that he might force the Senate to admit the necessity of renewing the principate, and when the full powers were conferred upon him, he accepted them, not for a term of years, as Augustus had done, but without specific limitation in time.

Tiberius was now fifty-six years old, and his reign lasted for more than twenty-two years. The judgment of Tacitus upon his career is contained in a famous passage which may be summed up as follows. During the lifetime of Augustus his life and reputation were beyond reproach. For the first eight years of his reign—till the death of his son Drusus in A.D. 23—he practised dissimulation and hypocrisy: for the next six—while his mother lived—virtue and vice

were blended in his conduct; while after her death his cruelty and lust asserted themselves, although the influence of Sejanus for a time restrained him from open excesses.

Now it is difficult to believe that fifty-six years of honourable life should be followed by so signal a declension from virtue, still more that the mask should not be finally thrown off until the age of seventy: and on the other hand it is certain that the breach between Tiberius and the Senate became wider as his reign advanced until it ended in the Emperor's retirement from Rome. Hence it is easy to infer that the theory of Tiberius' gradual degeneration is primarily an expression of his growing unpopularity. The causes of that unpopularity are not far to seek. Tiberius was by nature and the traditions of his family proud and reserved; and he had learnt under Augustus to despise and loathe the society which had treated him alternately with servility and insolence. There had been a vein of tenderness in his nature; the historian Velleius tells us of his kindness to the wounded in his campaigns, and there is a still more significant story of the wistful looks which he cast at the wife whom Augustus had compelled him to divorce. But he had seen human nature at its worst, and it must have been with bitterness of soul that he took up the reins of government. This must be remembered in reading of the tragedies which followed, and to which we no longer possess the key.

The reign began with a military crisis. The legions in Pannonia and on the Rhine, dissatisfied

Photo] [*K. Moscioni*

TIBERIUS.

(*Vatican.*)

with the conditions of their service, pay, and pensions, broke into open mutiny. Drusus, the Emperor's son, soon restored order in Pannonia, while Germanicus, with great courage and fine loyalty to Tiberius, refused to listen to the suggestion that he should strike a blow for the supreme power, and, taking his life in his hand, appealed to the better instincts of the legionaries and brought them back to their allegiance. He lost no time in leading the discontented troops into German territory in search of plunder; and in the two following years the armies of the Rhine, co-operating with the North Sea squadron, avenged the death of Varus and his legions by marching as far as the Elbe, and defeating such bodies of the enemy as ventured to meet them in open battle. Then Tiberius recalled Germanicus to Rome, and the enemies of the Emperor suggested that the conquest of Germany had been sacrificed to personal jealousy. This does not seem to have been the truth. Tiberius decided, as Augustus had decided before him, that the extension of Roman rule to the Elbe was impracticable, although it was necessary that both banks of the Rhine should be held. After the recall of Germanicus, two military districts were formed under the names of Upper and Lower Germany, each garrisoned by four legions under a *legatus*. The headquarters of these army corps were at Moguntiacum (Mainz) and Castra Vetera (Xanten).

In A.D. 17 Germanicus celebrated a brilliant triumph over the conquered Germans, and was then despatched to the East with an extraordinary command embracing all the provinces beyond the

Hellespont. The prestige of Rome in the East had suffered during the latter years of Augustus' reign from the failure of all efforts to establish a friendly candidate on the throne of Armenia. Germanicus now achieved a diplomatic triumph by gaining the consent of the Parthian king to the investiture of Zeno, a descendant of Mark Antony; at the same time the client-kingdoms of Cappadocia and Commagene, which commanded the passage of the upper Euphrates, were transformed into provinces. Then followed the first great tragedy of the reign. When Tiberius sent Germanicus to the East he placed Cn. Piso in command of Syria. Piso belonged to the highest aristocracy of Rome, and his wife Plancina was an intimate friend of Livia and a hated rival of Germanicus' wife, Agrippina. It was hinted that Tiberius and Livia foresaw the friction which the appointment would bring about, and even encouraged Piso to assert his independence of Germanicus' authority; and when Germanicus fell ill at Antioch, and, after commanding Piso to leave his province, died in the belief (as was said) that he had been the victim of foul play, an outburst of indignation swept over the Empire. Piso and Plancina were brought to trial, and though the charge of poisoning broke down, Piso was clearly guilty of constructive treason in disobeying his superior, and anticipated conviction by suicide, while Plancina was saved by the influence of Livia. The result was fatal to the popularity of Tiberius, while Germanicus became a popular hero, and figures in the pages of Tacitus as one of those loves of the Roman people who die young.

Meanwhile Rome and the provinces felt the strong hand of the new ruler, who carried steadily forward the work of Augustus. The popular assembly was deprived even of the form of elective rights, and gradually ceased to be consulted in legislation. Rome was placed under a permanent *praefectus urbi*, who controlled the police of the city.[1] Disorder was suppressed, the immoral rites of Isis were prohibited, and four thousand Jewish freedmen were deported to Sardinia. Above all, the government of the Imperial provinces was entrusted to honest and capable public servants under effective control, and merit was recognised (we can scarcely say rewarded) by long tenure of office. Thus Poppæus Sabinus, whom Tiberius had placed in command of the united provinces of Macedonia and Achaia in A.D. 15, after withdrawing them (on their own petition) from the control of the Senate, remained at his post throughout almost the whole reign. Moreover, the duties of the government towards the governed were recognised by liberal aid bestowed on the victims of fire and earthquake, while misgovernment in the senatorial provinces was in several cases punished by the exile of the offenders.

The most serious military operations of the reign (after the close of Germanicus' campaigns in Germany) were those carried on in North Africa against the Berber tribesmen under their leader Tacfarinas, who for seven years (A.D. 17–24) defied the military

[1] Under Augustus a *temporary* "prefect of the city" had held office during the Emperor's absence. The *praefectura urbis* now became the great prize of the senatorial career.

governors of Numidia and carried his *razzias* into the heart of the province. A rebellion in Gaul, which broke out in A.D. 21, headed by two Romanised Gauls, Florus and Sacrovir, was speedily suppressed.

In Rome, however, profound discontent reigned—discontent amongst the rabble, whose amusements were curtailed, and discontent in the aristocratic society for which Tiberius was at no pains to disguise his contempt. It is hardly true to say that his government met with opposition, but a sterile and ineffectual hostility to the new *régime* continued to exist, and to find expression in private circles. Against this a weapon was forged in the liberal interpretation of the law of treason (*Lex majestatis*), which, as Rome had no public prosecutor, was set in motion by private informers (*delatores*). The system was a bad one, but, at least in the earlier years of his reign, Tiberius endeavoured to prevent its abuse.

The year A.D. 23 marks a turning-point in his history. The sudden death of his only son, Drusus, left a grandchild of four years as his only male descendant, and he was forced to rest his hopes of a peaceable succession on the two eldest sons of Germanicus. But, as time was to reveal, the death of Tiberius' son was in reality the work of the prefect of the prætorian guards, L. Ælius Seianus, who had seduced Drusus' wife Livilla (the sister of Germanicus), and with her aid poisoned the young prince.

The father of Seianus had risen to the prefecture of the guards under Augustus, and Tiberius on his

accession associated the son with the father in the command. To his influence was due the concentration of the prætorian cohorts in their new barracks on the Esquiline—a momentous step which revealed to Rome the strength of its military garrison, and to the guards the full extent of their power.

Year by year his influence grew, and on the death of Drusus he became the all-powerful friend of the Emperor and the best-hated man in Rome. His ambition knew no limits, and he proposed a marriage between himself and Drusus' widow, which Tiberius forbade. Seianus then determined to destroy the house of Germanicus root and branch, hoping thus to clear his path to the throne. By means of informations laid under the *Lex majestatis*, the friends and connections of Agrippina were struck down one by one. Tiberius was persuaded that the atmosphere of Rome was thick with plots; the foulest of the charges levelled against him in secret were repeated in his presence before the High Court of the Senate; and at last, in A.D. 26, Seianus induced his master to leave Rome for ever and seek a secure retreat on the shores of Capri. Three years later Livia died, and without a moment's hesitation—Tiberius was now seventy years of age—Seianus struck his final blow. The Senate received a letter ordering the arrest of Agrippina and her eldest son, though no charge of treason was formulated. A second message required immediate action, and they were banished to barren islands. In A.D. 30 Seianus brought about the fall of the second son of Germanicus, having first seduced his wife. But it would seem that Tiberius, although

he gave credence to Seianus' charges, was beginning to divine whither his ambition was tending. He despatched the favourite to Rome, and forbade him to revisit Capreæ. Seianus foresaw his disgrace, and resolved to forestall it; but Antonia (the widow of Tiberius' brother) became cognisant of the plot and revealed it to the Emperor. A trusted officer, Macro, was sent to Rome, with a commission to lull the suspicions of Seianus and to assume the command of the guards while the Senate was sitting. Early in the morning of October 18, A.D. 31, the Senate met in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, and a long and wordy letter from Capri was read by the consul. It closed dramatically with a demand for Seianus' punishment, and before the day was over his body was dragged down the Gemonian steps by the executioner's hook and exposed to the insults of the mob. A reign of terror followed, in which the friends and supporters of Seianus found short shrift at the hands of the Senate.

For six years more Tiberius lived on, haunted by maddening suspicions, which wrung from him the cry of agony addressed to the Senate: "May the gods and goddesses inflict on me a worse death than that which I die daily, if I know what or how to write, or what to refrain from writing." His hand lay heavy on the house of Germanicus. Agrippina and her son Drusus were allowed, or compelled, to perish by starvation. But a younger son of Germanicus, Gaius Cæsar, surnamed Caligula after the soldier's boot, because he had been born in the camp at Xanten, was summoned to Capri and marked out as the

destined successor of the Emperor, whose grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, was some years younger. Tiberius, however, made the two princes co-heirs of his private fortune, and admitted neither to co-regency with himself.

Horrible tales were told of the orgies of lust and cruelty which took place in the seclusion of Capri. Of their truth or falsity we have no means of judging; at any rate, Tiberius held the reins of government firmly, and when the death of Zeno left the Armenian throne once more vacant, sent out (in A.D. 35) an expedition under L. Vitellius, which succeeded in establishing a friendly potentate, Mithradates the Iberian, as King of Armenia, and concluding a peace with Parthia. In A.D. 37 Tiberius left Capri, and, travelling slowly along the Appian Way, looked his last on Rome, but retraced his steps without entering the city and died at Misenum on March 16th. The news was hailed with joy by the Roman mob, who shouted "Tiberius to the Tiber!"

There was now no question of restoring the Republic. The son of Germanicus was greeted with wild enthusiasm by the populace, and two days after Tiberius' death the constituent powers of the principate were conferred upon him by the Senate, which granted all his requests save the deification of his predecessor. Gaius adopted his cousin Tiberius Gemellus, but did not associate him with himself in the principate. He courted popularity by proclaiming an amnesty to political exiles, banishing informers, restoring the elective functions of the *comitia*, professing to respect the independent sovereignty of the

Senate, and lavishing the vast sums hoarded by Tiberius in extravagant largesses and entertainments, and speedily became the darling of the people. Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, describes the delight with which the new era was hailed throughout the Empire, and the dejection which succeeded when after seven months he fell dangerously ill—in reality as the result of dissipation and sensuality. When he recovered the world learnt its mistake.

Gaius had been brought up together with a group of Oriental princelings whom Augustus had caused to be educated in Rome in order to fit them for the task of Romanising the vassal principalities of the East. From these playmates, and especially from Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, he imbibed a conception of Oriental despotism which he hoped one day to realise. At the court of Tiberius he learnt to mask his feelings, and witnessed unmoved the ruin and death of his mother and brothers; he studied the moods of Tiberius, and by flattery and adroitness made his succession secure. Then, when he found himself undisputed master of the Roman world, he plunged into an orgy of license and excitement which soon culminated in insanity and turned his four years' reign into a hideous carnival of lust and murder. So long as the treasures accumulated by Tiberius lasted, the world witnessed nothing worse than such insane freaks of construction as the great bridge thrown from the Palatine to the Capitol, resting on the temple of Augustus and the Basilica Julia as its piers, or the high-road, laid on a causeway of ships, which spanned the bay of

Baiæ. The amphitheatre and the circus were constantly filled with a rabble which saw senators and knights—nay, even the Emperor himself—taking part in the chariot races, gladiatorial shows, and wild-beast hunts. But when Gaius found himself in want of money to meet the demands of his boundless extravagance, he revived the machinery of the treason courts, and a reign of terror more ghastly than that which had darkened the latter years of Tiberius began. Nor were its victims drawn only from the Senate, or, indeed, from Italy. In the third year of his reign Gaius wintered in Gaul and extorted vast sums from its inhabitants. The contents of the Imperial residence on the Palatine were conveyed to Lugdunum (Lyons), and there put up to auction by the Emperor himself, and knocked down for huge prices to unwilling purchasers. The pretext of Gaius' journey was a disturbance on the German frontier; but more serious still was the attitude of Lentulus Gætulicus, the commandant of Upper Germany, who had defied Tiberius to remove him from his post, and was now conspiring with Lepidus, the widower of Gaius' sister Drusilla. Gaius had, it is said, lived openly with his sister after the fashion of the Ptolemies, and had caused her to be deified after her death in A.D. 38. His other sisters, Agrippina and Julia, were implicated in the conspiracy of Lentulus and Lepidus, and when the plot was discovered and the leaders executed, they were banished.

Early in A.D. 40 Gaius led a large army to Gessoriacum (Boulogne), with the avowed intention

of taking ship for Britain ; but—if the story be true —the troops received the order to fill their helmets with shells, which were sent to Rome as "spoils of the ocean." On August 31st he re-entered Rome, celebrating not a triumph, but an ovation, and for about five months exercised an undisguised tyranny over all classes of his subjects, destroying such popularity as remained to him with the populace by the imposition of extraordinary taxes. At the opening of his reign he had provided the playmates of his youth with principalities in the Eastern provinces—a retrograde step in Imperial policy, since the gradual absorption of the protected states had been clearly indicated by Augustus as an aim to be kept in view—and had, in particular, restored to Herod Agrippa the greater part of his grandfather's dominions ; but he now summoned Ptolemy, king of Mauretania, to Rome, and suddenly ordered his execution and the confiscation of his immense treasures. He demanded that divine honours should be paid to him throughout the Empire; and when the Jews alone refused, ordered a colossal statue of himself to be placed in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem. In vain did the Jews of Alexandria send an embassy to Rome, whose interview with the Emperor is described to us by the philosopher Philo. Gaius kept the envoys hurrying in his train from room to room, stopping now and again to ask such a question as "Why do you not eat pork?" and finally dismissing them with the saying, "Those who do not recognise my divinity are after all more unfortunate than criminal." But he rejected their

petition, and the Jews were on the point of breaking out into open rebellion when the news came that Gaius had been struck down in a vaulted corridor still traversed by those who visit the ruins of the Palatine — by Cassius Chærea (a tribune of the guard) and a few other conspirators (January 24, A.D. 41). He was in his twenty-ninth year.

For the moment it might have seemed that the principate, or at least the dynasty, was in imminent danger of extinction. With Gaius perished the last male of the Julian *gens*, since he had neither natural nor adopted sons—and of the lineal descendants of Augustus the grandson of Germanicus, who was afterwards to ascend the throne under the name of Nero, was only four years old, while the rest had but remote claims to the succession, since they were the offspring of marriages outside the Imperial circle. There remained Claudius, the brother of Germanicus and uncle of the murdered Emperor, who was now fifty-one years of age, but who, as the butt of the family, had been excluded from the functions of government, neglected, ill-treated, and allowed to divide his time between low company and literary studies. No one, in fact, had considered him a serious candidate for empire save the shrewd and unscrupulous Jew, Herod Agrippa, who, having successfully schemed for the elevation of Gaius and reaped a rich reward, was silently meditating a second *coup*. Agrippa saw that, weak as the dynasty was, the weakness of the Republican system—so far as it survived—was greater.

Not only had the aristocracy been decimated by

the judicial murders of the last two reigns, but the threads of government had been silently gathered into the hands of the permanent officials—chiefly freedmen—of the Imperial household, and, above all, the concentration of the household troops in the prætorian barracks had made their camp the real centre of gravity; and to the guards an Emperor was a necessity of existence. Thus, when the Senate met in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, and, while some voices were raised for the restoration of the Republic, others proposed the free election of a *princeps*, and private ambitions were aroused, the question at issue was decided elsewhere. A few prætorians, while plundering the empty palace, found Claudius hiding behind a curtain, and carried him off to the prætorian barracks, where he was saluted *Imperator*. Then began negotiations with the Senate, carried on by the astute Agrippa, who persuaded Claudius to accept the dignity thrust upon him and to promise a donative of 15,000 sesterces (£120) per head to the guards. The Senate was forced to yield with the best grace which it could command, and to permit the execution of the murderers of Gaius.

Claudius received less than justice from his contemporaries, and their verdict has been repeated until recent times by posterity. The clever, witty, but intensely malevolent caricature written by Seneca for the amusement of Nero, and the gloomy narrative of Tacitus, in which the scandals of the court loom out of all perspective, have contributed to impress the well-known image of the ungainly pedant, helpless as

a child in the hands of women and favourites, in the minds of men. Physically weak and grotesque, constitutionally suspicious and cowardly, and intellectually pedantic, he possessed just the defects which are patent to contemporaries ; while his genuine desire for good government and sense of Rome's civilising mission—even his love of hard, unremitting labour—made no appeal to the men of his time, who jeered at his extension of the Roman franchise to the provincials, and viewed with suspicion and jealousy the policy of the *carrière ouverte aux talents*. That we are able to revise the estimate of Claudius formed by his contemporaries is largely due to the discovery of inscriptions recording his acts and sayings. From Lyons we have a portion of the speech (to be dealt with presently) on the admission of the Æduan chiefs to the senatorial career ; from an Alpine valley comes the text of an edict confirming the claims of a half-barbarous tribe to Roman citizenship ; from Tegea an ordinance relieving the provincials of part, at least, of the burden of providing post-horses and carriages for the Imperial service. From such documents as these we learn that Claudius, for all his pedantry, was not without common sense, and that the welfare of his subjects was at all times near to his heart.

In A.D. 39 Claudius had been married for the third time—his first two wives were not of Imperial rank—to Valeria Messalina, a princess whose father and mother were cousins to each other and to Claudius, all three being descendants of Octavia, Augustus' sister. She was perhaps fifteen years old, while Claudius

Photo. [*R. Moscioni.*

CLAUDIUS.

(*Vatican.*)

was forty-nine; so that it is not difficult to believe that part, at least, of the tale of her shameless infidelity to her husband may be true. It is at any rate clear that on Claudius' accession to the principate she used her influence over him to remove from her path all possible rivals and all those who were personally distasteful to her. Julia, the sister of Gaius, another Julia, the granddaughter of Tiberius, even her own stepfather, Appius Junius Silanus, were among her victims; the first-named was put to death on a charge of adultery with the philosopher Seneca, who was banished to Corsica. It was probably as a result of these executions that a conspiracy was formed in A.D. 42, headed by Furius Camillus Scribonianus, commanding the Seventh and Eleventh Legions in Dalmatia. The conspiracy collapsed in a few days by the return of the troops to their allegiance, and was followed by a reign of terror, whose most famous episode was the suicide of Pætus and his wife Arria, the parents of the famous Stoic Thrasea. Arria drew the sword from her own breast and gave it to her husband, with the words, "Pætus, it does not hurt." From this time onward, plots, real or imaginary, and executions succeeded each other rapidly. Two prefects of the guard, several members of a highly aristocratic family which numbered Pompey and Crassus amongst its ancestors, as well as men who had won their way to nobility under the new *régime*, such as Valerius Asiaticus, a native of Vienne, who attained a second consulship in A.D. 46, were struck down. Messalina's principal agents

were the informer Suillius and L. Vitellius, the chief courtier of the reign and father of a future Emperor.

Meantime, both at home and abroad, Claudius was leaving his mark on the history of the Empire and its government. In A.D. 43 he determined to carry out the conquest of Britain, which Augustus had meditated, but decided to postpone if not to forego. We are told that his aim was to secure a legitimate triumph for himself; and in the inscription of his triumphal arch he boasts of having been the first to reduce to subjection nations "beyond the ocean." But there were graver reasons for the forward movement. Britain was the *Hinterland* of Gaul; in the century which had passed since Cæsar's expedition trade and peaceful intercourse had carried Romano-Gallic civilisation far into the southern and eastern parts of our island; and finally a powerful monarchy, ruled by Cunobellinus (the Cymbeline of Shakespeare), had established itself with its capital at Camulodunum (Colchester). Now Southern Britain, though not subject to the Empire, had been brought within the Roman sphere of influence by Augustus, who had made treaties with British chiefs; hence when Cunobellinus extended his dominions at the expense of his neighbours, it was easy to find a pretext for intervention when the time came to settle outstanding accounts with the new power. A force of four legions, drawn from the armies of the Rhine and the Danube, and led by a first-rate general, A. Plautius Silvanus, and able divisional commanders, such as Vespasian and his brother, landed, as it would seem, on the coast of Kent, and drove the

Britons across the Medway. Soon the Emperor himself, attended by a distinguished staff, joined the advancing army in time to see the passage of the Thames and the fall of Camulodunum, and to receive the submission of eleven British "kings." That these successes were not gained without hard fighting is made clear by the fact that Claudius was five times saluted as *Imperator* during the operations of the year. After staying only sixteen days in the island he returned to celebrate his triumph, leaving his generals to carry on the subjection of the islanders. Vespasian is said to have won thirty battles in the south and south-west, and to have reduced the Isle of Wight; Plautius pushed on into the Midlands, and probably reached the lines of the Severn and the Trent, while his successor, Ostorius Scapula, found the hostility of the Brigantes in Derbyshire and Yorkshire a bar to further advance northwards, and encountered a desperate resistance in the Welsh marches, which even the capture of King Caratacus (Caradoc) and his family did not break.

The conquest of Britain was the most notable achievement of Claudius' reign in foreign policy. The annexation of Mauretania on the death of Ptolemy (p. 55) was not carried out without a struggle; but the vassal-kingdom of Thrace was peacefully absorbed on the death of its native ruler in A.D. 46. On the Eastern frontier Claudius was less successful. An attempt to set a friendly king on the Parthian throne in the person of Meherdates, a prince educated in Rome, failed miserably; and in the latter years of the reign Armenia once more passed

out of Roman control, partly through treachery in the family of the Roman vassal, Mithradates (p. 52) partly through the accession of a powerful king, Vologases, in Parthia but largely also through the incapacity (and worse) of Rome's representatives in the East.[1]

In the home government of Claudius, his tenure of the censorship in the years A.D. 47–8 marks an epoch. The office was indeed a superfluity in the system of the principate. Augustus had never held it, but had performed its functions in virtue of his other prerogatives. But Claudius was before all things an antiquary, and found a congenial task in reviving an historical dignity, while he was thereby also enabled to bring into relief certain aspects of his own policy. This was especially the case with the revision of the roll of the Senate. Claudius made it clear that the *princeps* could not only control admission to the senatorial order, but could also compel the retention of its privileges, punishing those who declined the rank of senators by depriving them even of that of knights. Still more important was his admission of Gaulish chieftains to the highest career in the state. We possess in the pages of Tacitus a freely composed summary of the speech delivered by Claudius in bringing this measure to the notice of the Senate, and (what is of far greater value) two bronze tablets discovered at Lyons in 1524, upon which fragments of the original text are engraved. The speech is tedious and discursive, packed with historical detail from the regal period onwards, and

[1] For Claudius' policy on the Rhine frontier, see below.

not free from serious blunders.[1] Nor could Claudius refrain from an allusion to the extension of the Empire "beyond the ocean." But it is valuable as showing that the advancement of the Æduí was barred by no legal disability, but only by inveterate prejudice, and that Claudius' aim was to elicit an expression of opinion from the Senate favourable to the step which he was about to take in virtue of his undoubted prerogative, viz., that of placing the Gaulish chiefs directly on the roll of the Senate[2] without previous tenure of a qualifying magistracy. Thus Claudius showed his grasp of the fact that the absorption of the subject races into the wider Roman nationality and their representation in the Imperial government was an aim to be pursued steadily, if cautiously; and he must have felt a deep satisfaction when the "numbering of the people" which closed the census showed an increase of more than 1,000,000 Roman citizens since the end of Augustus' reign. Seneca, in his satire on Claudius, tells us with a sneer that he "had determined to see every German, Gaul, and Briton in a *toga*;" and there is no doubt that he was liberal in his grants of citizenship both to individuals and to communities, while he planted colonies as centres of Roman life in many provinces, notably in those of the West, where Cologne and Trèves, amongst other cities, owed their foundation to him.

[1] Thus Claudius supposed that G. Fabius Allobrogicus (consul in B.C. 121) derived his surname from his descent, and not from his victories over the Allobroges.

[2] By the process of *adlectio*.

The great censors of the Republic had left behind them works of public utility which had perpetuated their fame; amongst their number was the ancestor of the Claudian house, Appius Claudius the Blind, whose name survives in that of the best known of Roman highways. Claudius determined that his own name should be linked with works of a like nature, and brought to completion the finest of the aqueducts whose stately arches still traverse the desolate Campagna—the Aqua Claudia and Anio Novus—while he constructed two new roads through Central Italy which improved the connections between Rome and the Adriatic coast, and restored the great highway over the Brenner which his father had laid down. Amongst the other acts of his censorship was the creation of fresh "patrician" families, in order that the supply of candidates for the older priesthoods (which had never been thrown open to the *plebs*) might be maintained.

In the year following the censorship of Claudius (A.D. 49) Messalina fell. Hitherto the freedmen who ruled in Claudius' name, and piled up wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, had tolerated her intrigues; but when her latest lover, Gaius Silius, aspired to supplant Claudius on the throne, they felt that their position was threatened. The story of the catastrophe which followed is well-nigh incredible; but it is beyond doubt that a mock marriage between Messalina and Silius was openly celebrated,[1] and that it was with the utmost difficulty that Narcissus,

[1] According to Suetonius, Claudius was induced to consent to this by means of a prophecy of evil threatening "the husband of Messalina."

the favourite freedman, opened Claudius' eyes to the truth, and prevented Messalina from throwing herself at her husband's feet in an irresistible appeal for mercy. Only by inducing Claudius to place him in command of the guard for a single day, and issuing orders in the Emperor's name but without his knowledge, could he secure her death. When Claudius asked why the "poor woman" delayed to appear before him, and was told that she was dead, he called for another cup of wine, and her name never passed his lips again.

As has been hinted already, the real heads of the executive were now the Emperor's freedmen, nominally chief clerks in the Imperial household, but in truth ministers of state. Of these there were three by whom the machinery of government was mainly controlled—the Finance Minister (*a rationibus*) through whose hands passed the revenues of the Imperial provinces and the income drawn from the Imperial domains; the Secretary of State (*ab epistulis*) whose department covered the correspondence of the Emperor with foreign states, provincial governors, &c., the whole system of military promotions and the corn supply of Rome; and the Secretary of Petitions (*a libellis*), who examined all requests made in writing to the Emperor. In A.D. 48 these offices were held by Pallas, formerly an agent of Antonia, Claudius' mother, and brother of Felix, the governor of Judæa before whom St. Paul was tried; Narcissus, the contriver of Messalina's downfall; and Callistus, a former slave and favourite of Gaius, who had but recently taken the place of Polybius,

REMAINS OF THE AQUA CLAUDIA.

one of Messalina's victims. Doubtless the bureaucracy, of which these able and business-like Greeks were the chiefs, had been perfecting its machinery since the days of Augustus, but it was under Claudius that its importance became patent to the world and its members received an official recognition which placed them almost on a level with the magistrates of the Roman people. The *insignia* of these latter officers had been conferred by earlier Emperors upon holders of the higher posts in the equestrian service; it was left for Claudius to bestow them upon his freedmen. Narcissus received (and despised) the *insignia* of the quæstorship after the fall of Messalina; to Pallas were assigned at a later date those of the prætorship, this time by senatorial decree.

Messalina dead, the three ministers had next to consider the provision of a fourth wife for Claudius. Their views on this all-important question differed: it was reserved for Pallas to achieve a triumph of policy by furthering the aims of Agrippina the younger, who had been banished by Gaius but restored by her uncle on his accession, and was ambitious of the throne, not merely on her own behalf, but on that of her son (now eleven years of age) by L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, the representative of a great Republican family and a descendant of Augustus' sister. Defying the Roman prejudice against marriage between uncle and niece, Claudius yielded to the undisguised advances of Agrippina, and a few weeks after Messalina's death she became his wife. Henceforward all her efforts were directed

to secure the succession for her son. Claudius had two children by Messalina—a son, Britannicus, and a daughter, Octavia, betrothed to L. Silanus, a great-great-grandson of Augustus. Silanus was first removed on a charge of incest, and Octavia was betrothed to the young Domitius. In A.D. 50 he was adopted by Claudius, and is henceforth known as Nero. At the same time Agrippina received the title Augusta, which had never yet been borne by an Empress during her husband's lifetime. In A.D. 51 the proconsular *imperium* was conferred on Nero, and other honours whose significance was unmistakable were heaped upon him, while the claims of Britannicus were tacitly ignored. Above all, the guards were secured by a liberal donative. Two years later the marriage of Nero with Octavia took place. It was high time that Claudius died; and on October 13, A.D. 54, he breathed his last, poisoned, as all the world believed, by his wife, who had secured the services of a certain Locusta, numbered by Tacitus "amongst the tools of monarchy," to compound the drug. On the same day Nero was presented to and acclaimed by the guards as Emperor. Claudius was added to the number of the gods; but the feelings of Roman society with respect to his divinity were expressed in the mordant satire of Seneca, which describes his ignominious ejection from Olympus, and the sentence of Æacus which doomed him to play at eternal hazard with a bottomless dice-box.

In judging the person and government of Nero we are again face to face with a problem difficult

of solution. Two verdicts which we owe to the greatest and noblest of his successors are worthy of record here. Trajan was wont to say that the first five years of his reign excelled the government of all other Emperors, whilst Marcus Aurelius wrote of "wild beasts and monsters, such as were Phalaris and Nero." Are we to suppose that Nero was at once an excellent ruler and an infamous man? On the first point we can scarcely hope for much further light, since the monumental records of his reign were systematically destroyed after his fall; nor is it perhaps likely that, if they could be recovered, he would, like Claudius, stand self-revealed by the tenour of his edicts. But it must be remembered that during the years of which Trajan spoke Nero was served by ministers of the highest capacity. In A.D. 49 Agrippiña had brought about the recall of Seneca, and made him Nero's tutor; two years later the prefecture of the guard was given to Afranius Burrus, a native of Vasio (Vaison in Provence), whose proved integrity and ability displayed in the private service of the Imperial house had raised him to the highest position open to a knight without passing through the usual steps in an official career. Under the *régime* of Seneca and Burrus the world prospered. The rule of the freedmen, which had offended Roman prejudices, seemed to be over, and with the new ministers the Romanised provinces of the West attained to representation in the government of the Empire. Moreover, the young Emperor put forth a programme in his first speech to the Senate which was skilfully repre-

NERO.

(*British Museum.*)

sented as a return to the principles of Augustus, *i.e.*, a strict division of functions between the *princeps* and the Senate, both in the judicial and executive spheres. Some effort was in fact made to carry this programme into effect. While the Emperor heard cases in which his own family or subordinates were concerned, the Senate sat as a high court of justice to try crimes committed by its own members or by those of the equestrian order, as well as cases remitted from the senatorial provinces; and administrative questions arising in Italy and the public provinces were submitted to it for decision from time to time. Yet its independence was largely unreal; the Emperor, if he took part in its deliberations, decided the issue by voting first—in this sense Nero is said by Tacitus to have "acquitted" a governor of Africa charged with maladministration; and we hear that the consuls "did not dare" to propose a decree on a matter within the Senate's competence without the knowledge of the Emperor. In the sphere of finance there could be no reversal of the process by which the Imperial treasury—now called the *fiscus*—dwarfed the older *aerarium* in importance, and in fact Nero placed the latter (which was strictly speaking at the disposal of the Senate) under the control of prefects responsible to himself. He likewise supplemented the revenues of the *aerarium* by large annual subventions, without which the public accounts would have showed a considerable deficit. In Rome, too, the administration was popular; the corn supply was placed in the capable hands of Fænius Rufus; and the *plebs*

received gifts in money and kind (*congiaria*), and was kept amused with sumptuous entertainments.

It is, of course, hard to determine how far the liberal spirit which informed the government was due to Nero himself; but it is just to recall the proposal which he made in A.D. 58 to abolish all indirect taxes and establish free trade throughout the Roman world. Unpractical as this was, it revealed a nature capable of generous impulses, which when wisely directed might bear fruit for the advantage of mankind. But there was another side to Nero's character. He was, in his own estimation, before all things an artist, and he certainly possessed the defects of the artistic temperament without its qualities. The inordinate vanity and disdain of moral restraints often associated with ill-founded pretensions to genius were enhanced beyond measure in Nero by that most terrible of intoxicants, the consciousness of absolute power. On the exercise of this power a check was at first imposed by the masterful Agrippina, who was determined to relinquish none of the ascendancy which she had enjoyed during the lifetime of Claudius under the rule of her son, and to be co-regent of the Empire in all but name. But her hopes were soon baulked of their fulfilment. Within a few weeks of Nero's accession Agrippina showed what her opponents had to expect by forcing Narcissus to forestall execution by suicide. From that moment Seneca and Burrus—although they themselves owed all to her—began a series of moves designed to checkmate her influence. They encouraged Nero to form a *liaison* with Acte, an

Imperial freedwoman, and by this means estranged him from his mother; they brought about the disgrace of Pallas, who secured from Nero a general pardon for his past acts, and retired to enjoy the fortune of £2,500,000 which he had amassed; and it was believed that they were cognisant of the first great crime of the reign—the poisoning of the young Britannicus, to whom Agrippina had turned when her son deserted her. Encouraged by these tokens, the court clique opposed to the Empress attacked her directly, accusing her of conspiring to dethrone Nero in favour of Rubellius Plautus, the great-grandson of Tiberius, and though she was able to rebut the charge with scorn, and even to cause it to recoil upon her accusers, she remained, for the four years that were left to her of life, the shadow of a mighty name.

During those years the eyes of the world were turned to the Eastern frontier, where, as related above (p. 63), Armenia had passed out of Roman and under Parthian control. Now, since the Emperors of the first dynasty, restrained perhaps by the testament of Augustus, shrank from the expense of converting the upper Euphrates into a scientific frontier as well as from the more ambitious policy of annexing the Armenian kingdom, it became necessary to face the Sisyphean task of maintaining a Roman vassal on the throne of Armenia. In A.D. 54 this task was committed to Cn. Domitius Corbulo, the ablest general in the Roman army, who had already made a name in a frontier command on the lower Rhine seven years before, and as a stern disciplinarian was

well-fitted to take charge of the Syrian army corps, which the enervating influences of barrack life in such towns as Antioch had rendered unfit to take the field. Two of the four legions stationed in Syria were placed under his orders and a third transferred from the Danube frontier, while the petty rulers of the protected states of the Euphrates were directed to hold their native levies at his disposal. Yet it was not until 57 A.D. that Corbulo ventured to lead his force into Armenia and to temper it for its work by the hardships of a winter in the field. In the years 58–9 A.D. he struck his blow, occupied successively the old and the new capitals of Armenia, Artaxata and Tigranocerta, and finally set Tigranes V., a descendant of Herod the Great, on the throne, while the client-princes were rewarded with strips of territory. Thus the *quinquennium Neronis* ended with a brilliant success.

In the same year (A.D. 59) came the crisis of the reign. For some time past Nero had been swayed by the *maîtresse en titre*, Poppæa Sabina, a woman described by Tacitus as possessing "everything save honour." Poppæa was the wife of T. Salvius Otho, a young man of the smart set which surrounded Nero. Report said that he had taken her from her first husband, Rufrius Crispinus, ex-prefect of the prætorians, for Nero's pleasure rather than his own, and that "his wife had then become his mistress": at any rate, he was removed to the governorship of Lusitania, to return ten years later as Emperor. Poppæa now determined to compass the fall of Agrippina, and easily persuaded Nero to contrive

his mother's murder. The first plot, which was to drown Agrippina in the bay of Naples by means of a ship which could be sunk at will, miscarried, and there was nothing left but to pretend that a dagger had been found on the person of the messenger sent by her to Nero with the news of her escape, and to order her execution. She died crying, "Strike the womb that bare Nero!"

Seneca and Burrus were forced to present the official legend of Agrippina's conspiracy to the subservient Senate, which heaped congratulations upon Nero, and the young Emperor, now twenty-two years old and his own master, ascended the Capitol and offered thanks to the immortal gods for his preservation. But though the ministers had saved appearances, they knew that their day was over. The use which Nero made of his new freedom might seem harmless enough; for it was his ambition to achieve pre-eminence on the stage and in the circus—as charioteer, actor, and above all as a musical performer, dressed in the long robe of Apollo the lyre-player. But to the Roman it meant that the Emperor was a Greek at heart; and Rome would have been scarcely less offended if Nero had shed blood as a gladiator in the arena than it was when he degraded himself—as it seemed to that age—by taking part in artistic competitions. And so inveterate were the prejudices of Roman society that six years elapsed before Nero, omnipotent as he was, ventured to court its applause on the public stage. Up till that time his performances took place either in his private circus in the Vatican gardens or in one

of the court theatres. In A.D. 60 a festival called the Neronia was instituted, at which musical, gymnastic, and equestrian contests took place after the fashion of the Greek games. The chief prizes were awarded to Nero, though he took no actual part in the performance—the influence of Seneca and Burrus was still too strong—but on the recurrence of the festival in A.D. 65 he cast all restraints aside and competed in playing and singing to the lyre.

In the meantime Burrus had died (62 A.D.) and the command of the guards had been divided between Fænius Rufus, the popular prefect of the corn supply, and Tigellinus, a man of low birth and no morals, who undermined the influence of Seneca until he anticipated disgrace by retirement, and launched Nero on the course of profligacy and cruelty which has made his name a proverb. There is no occasion to dwell on the doings of that brilliant and immoral court; they have had their parallels in modern times, and may, moreover, have been exaggerated by prurient gossip. But the worst of Nero's crimes was the divorce of his young and faithful wife Octavia, procured by the subornation of the blackest perjury, and followed by her execution; and as to this there is no conflict of opinion amongst our ancient authorities. The divorce was of course followed by Nero's marriage with Poppæa, by whom he had no child, save a daughter born only to die in A.D. 63. The same year saw the conclusion of the Parthian war, which had broken out afresh in A.D. 61, when the Roman nominee was expelled from Armenia, and had been marked by a grave disaster to the Roman

arms. L. Cæsennius Pætus, the governor of Cappadocia, allowed himself to be cooped up in an untenable position at Randeia (close to Mount Taurus), and was forced to conclude a shameful capitulation. Corbulo marched from Syria to his relief, but was too late to save the honour of Rome—some said that his delay was not disinterested. Pætus was recalled; an overwhelming force (probably 50,000 strong) was concentrated under Corbulo's command; Armenia was occupied; and eventually a peace was concluded by which Tiridates, the brother of the Parthian king, received the crown of Armenia as Nero's vassal. In A.D. 66 he received investiture in Rome at the hands of the Emperor.

In A.D. 64 took place the event which above all others has made Nero's reign famous—the burning of Rome. The fire broke out in the wooden shops adjoining the Circus Maximus, and, fanned by a high wind, swept over the Palatine, reducing the buildings of Augustus to a heap of ashes, then crossed the Velia, destroying the temple of Vesta and other monuments of early Rome, and climbed the slopes of the Esquiline. The conflagration raged for a week, and a second outbreak ravaged the Campus Martius. It was neither the first nor the last of such visitations, and no proof can be adduced that it was other than accidental; but it owes undying fame in part to the rumour which gained credence that Nero was its author and sang an *aria* from his own opera on the Fall of Troy as he watched the flames, in part to the fact that it led directly to that persecution of the Christians which brought to the apostles of the

Photo] *[Anderson.*

CORBULO.

(*Capitol.*)

Jew and the Gentile the crown of martyrdom. Christianity had hitherto enjoyed the toleration which Rome extended to the Jews, being regarded as a Jewish sect; but the undying hatred of Jew and Christian had begun, and it is very possible that the Jews in Rome may have found occasion, in the mysterious words of Christian enthusiasts foretelling the fiery end of the age, to throw the charge of incendiarism upon their enemies, and thus to provide Nero with the scapegoat which he needed. To him the burning of Rome seemed a fortunate accident, since it enabled him to rebuild the city on a rational and healthy plan, sweeping away its foul and dangerous slums, and replacing them by wide arcaded thoroughfares, and above all to create the palace of his dreams, which, though bearing the name of the Golden House, was much more than a dwelling, with its forests and pastures, its lakes and rivers, covering the slope of the Esquiline and the valley where now stands the Colosseum. To adorn it Greece and Asia were ransacked for treasures of art; to minister to the luxury of its dwellers sea-water was pumped from the Mediterranean and sulphur springs carried from Tivoli. But the exactions to which Nero had recourse in order to meet the huge expense of his constructions dealt the death-blow to such popularity as he still possessed.

In A.D. 65 his life was threatened by the first serious conspiracy of the reign. Its danger lay in the fact that one of the prætorian prefects and several officers of the guard were amongst the plotters, who endeavoured also to tamper with the loyalty of

the squadron at Misenum. The senators and knights concerned in the plot were less dangerous; they mostly bore private grudges against Nero—with the poet Lucan the motive was literary jealousy—and only one is said to have acted from "love of the Republic." The nominal head was L. Piso, a man of high birth but no decision of character; Rome would have gained nothing had he ascended Nero's throne. The story of the detection of the conspiracy is one of sordid treachery, relieved by the splendid constancy under torture of the freedwoman Epicharis; but its most important consequence was that Tigellinus was able to strike down, not only the guilty parties, but others who, like Seneca, were known to regard the court with tacit aversion—above all, the heads of the Stoic "opposition," Thrasea Pætus and Barea Soranus, who, though barren of statesmanlike ideas, and pathetically inefficient in their demonstrations of independence, were obnoxious as parading a virtue which refused to accept at the hands of vice its customary tribute.

In the closing years of Nero's reign we lose the guidance of Tacitus, and the scene shifts from Rome to Greece, whither Nero went to gain the distinction of a victor in all the greater games and to find a congenial atmosphere in the boundless adulation of the Greeks, which he rewarded by proclaiming Greece "free" at the Isthmian Games. He then summoned Corbulo from Syria, and the two governors of the military districts on the Rhine. All three were told that they must die, and committed suicide. Meantime Rome was governed by two freedmen, Helius

and Polyclitus, and the former, awake to the ominous sounds of discontent amongst the Western armies, urgently entreated his master to return to Rome. Nero re-entered the city in triumph, wearing the Olympian crown of wild olive, but soon sought surroundings more to his taste at Naples. At length the storm broke. In Gaul a Romanised provincial, Julius Vindex, who had attained to the governorship of Gallia Lugdunensis, raised the standard of revolt and gathered a force of 100,000 men. Probably his aim was to achieve independence for the Gauls, but in the meantime he made overtures to the governors of the neighbouring provinces, and was so far successful that L. Sulpicius Galba, who commanded in Hither Spain, an elderly man with some military reputation, declared himself the general "of the Senate and people," thus proclaiming the restoration of the Republic. But before he could join his forces with those of Vindex, the rebellion had been crushed by the prompt action of Verginius Rufus, legate of Upper Germany, a brave and loyal soldier, who refused the title of Emperor offered to him by his legions after their victory. All might still have been saved but for the poltroonery of Nero, and the treachery of Nymphidius Sabinus, prefect of the prætorians, who promised a donative to the guards in the name of Galba. Nero's courage failed him, and he took refuge by night in the villa of a faithful freedman near the Via Nomentana. There he lay for hours on a couch of straw, not daring to face death, until the news came that the Senate had ordered his execution. Even then his hand trembled,

and a freedman drove the knife into his throat. An actor to the last, he exclaimed, "What an artist dies with me!" There was, indeed, no room for such an artist on the throne of Augustus. Nevertheless, he had destroyed all that remained of the old Rome of the Romans, and the glamour of decadent Hellenistic culture clung to the city which had arisen from its ashes.

III

THE YEAR OF FOUR EMPERORS

THE events which followed the death of Nero "revealed" (in the words of Tacitus) "the secret of empire, that an Emperor could be created elsewhere than at Rome"; but they also proved that no permanent peace was possible until the candidate of the legions was not merely secure in the possession of Rome, but had laid the foundations of a fresh dynasty. Of the restoration of the Republic there could be no question. Galba, it will be remembered, had for a brief space described himself as "legate of the Senate and people"; but as soon as the allegiance of the guards was secured, no more was heard of this. Clodius Macer, commandant of the Third Legion in Numidia, adopted the style of *propraetor Africae*, which recalled the days of the Republican governors, and struck coins in the name of the Senate bearing the figure of Liberty. But he raised a fresh legion which he called by his own name (*legio I Macriana*), and the report mentioned by Tacitus, that he intended to starve Rome out by keeping back the corn fleet, and thus pave the way to his elevation

to the principate, is most likely true. He was, however, speedily crushed by the Imperial procurator in Africa, and a like fate befel Fonteius Capito, *legatus* of Lower Germany, at the hands of his divisional commanders, who acted without Galba's orders.

These executions did not tend to increase the popularity of the new Emperor, who had been met, on approaching Rome, by a detachment of marines enrolled by Nero, and had ordered them to be cut to pieces; he had, moreover, commanded some senators to be put to death for their supposed complicity in an abortive attempt made by Nymphidius Sabinus, the prefect of the guard, to seize the throne for himself. Galba, as Tacitus says, "would have been universally judged to be fitted for empire had he never ruled." But while his virtues were negative, his talents were mediocre and his blunders conspicuous. The fact that he had identified himself with the revolt of Vindex caused him to be regarded with deep distrust by the legions of Germany, while in Rome he fell into discredit through the ill-considered means which he took to replenish the empty treasury, and through a parsimony which was thrown into strong relief by the rapacity and extravagance of his triumvirate of advisers. These were Vinius, who had held a command under Galba in Spain and had urged him to aspire to the Empire, Laco, the new prætorian prefect, and Icelus, a freedman who was now raised to equestrian rank. The first-named incurred special odium by reason of the fact that his influence availed to save Tigellinus, to whose

daughter he was betrothed, from the fate which overtook most of the unworthy followers of Nero.

In January, A.D. 69, grave news of disaffection amongst the German legions reached Rome, and the Emperor and his counsellors decided that the adoption of a destined successor to the principate furnished the most likely means of securing their wavering loyalty. The choice fell on L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi Licinianus, a young man of high lineage—he was descended both from Pompey and from Crassus—but of no experience in administration, since his family had suffered proscription at the hands of Claudius and Nero and he himself had passed his youth in exile. He was now to become, as Tacitus says, "for four days a Cæsar." For the adoption of Piso at once brought a rival into the field in the person of Otho, who, it will be remembered, had been virtually banished by Nero to the governorship of Lusitania (p. 75), and having been the first to espouse Galba's cause, considered himself cheated of his due reward. He counted, not without reason, on the growing unpopularity of Galba and the support of those who looked back with regret to the glories of that luxurious and dissolute court of which he had once been so conspicuous an ornament. All that was needed was to corrupt the guard; and this was soon done. To quote Tacitus once more, "Two private soldiers undertook to transfer the empire of the Roman people; and they carried out their undertaking." On January 15, whilst Galba was sacrificing upon the Palatine, Otho was acclaimed as Emperor by the prætorians; and within a few hours both

OTHO.

(*British Museum.*)

Galba and Piso had been slain, the former in the Forum, the latter by the temple of Vesta, in which he had taken sanctuary, and the Senate had conferred upon Otho the title of Augustus.

But he was not destined to enjoy in peace the Empire which he had won by treachery. Immediately on his accession it became known that not only had the legions of Upper Germany refused to take the oath of allegiance to Galba on the 1st of January, and called upon the guard to elect a new Emperor—they had been exasperated by the appointment of Hordeonius Flaccus, an aged and incapable general, in place of their beloved Verginius Rufus (p. 82)—but that the troops of the Lower Province had taken the more decisive step of saluting their commander, Aulus Vitellius, the son of Claudius' co-censor, as *Imperator*. Homage was first rendered to Vitellius by Fabius Valens, commander of the First Legion, who arrived at Cologne with a troop of horse on the 2nd of January. The news spread with lightning speed; within twenty-four hours the armies of the Rhine were united in their allegiance, and the governors of the adjoining provinces of Gaul soon followed suit.

Vitellius owed his choice to the accident of his birth, and especially to his father's distinction, which, as Valens put it, "made it unsafe for him to remain in a private station." He was lazy, sensual, and incapable; but his lieutenants were bold and ambitious, especially Aulus Cæcina Allienus, who was in command in the Upper Province. They recognised the need of prompt action, and drew up a plan of

campaign by which Cæcina with 36,000 men was to march through Switzerland and enter Italy by the Great St. Bernard, while Valens, with 40,000 troops, was to take the route through Eastern Gaul and cross the Cottian Alps by the pass of Mont Genevre. Vitellius himself, with a still larger force, followed slowly in their rear.

To meet the advancing armies Otho could rely only on the guards and the legions stationed in Illyricum and on the Danube frontier; for Spain, which at first recognised him as Emperor, soon joined the other provinces of the West in their revolt. He was no ruler of men, and soon offended the Senate by posing as the avenger of Nero, whose name he adopted for a time in order to court the favour of the mob. Nevertheless, active measures were taken to deal with the military situation and to hold the forces of Vitellius in check until the arrival of the Illyrian legions. Troops were landed on the Riviera in order to create a diversion against the army of Valens, and the line of the Po was held by detachments of the guard and the marines commanded by Suetonius Paulinus, famous for his operations in Britain, Vestricius Spurinna, and other officers. Cæcina's column was the first to enter Italy, and pushed on rapidly through the plain of Lombardy, gaining some slight advantages at Ticinum and Cremona—which marked the limit of its advance—but sustaining a check at Placentia, on the right bank of the Po, upon which town an unsuccessful attack was led by Cæcina in person.

Two engagements fought near Cremona sufficed

to decide the issue of the war. Otho's generals had concentrated their forces at Betriacum, about sixteen miles due west of Cremona on the Via Postumia, and had been joined by one legion—the Thirteenth—from Pannonia. Cæcina, anxious to snatch a victory before the arrival of Valens, laid an ambush in the woods overhanging the Via Postumia, at a spot named Locus Castorum, within four miles of the enemy's position. The Othonians, however, received intelligence of the stratagem, and contrived a counter-ambush, by means of which Cæcina and his troops were entrapped and almost surrounded. Paulinus, however, who was in command of the Othonians failed to follow up his success, alleging the danger to his exhausted troops from the reserves which Cæcina could bring up from Cremona. He was shrewdly suspected of treachery to the cause of Otho.

Valens now joined forces with Cæcina at Cremona, and Otho, who had set out from Rome on March 14, marching on foot at the head of the guards and exposing himself to every hardship, arrived at Betriacum. Suspecting the loyalty of his generals, he had placed his brother, Titianus, in nominal command of the army; but the prætorian prefect, Proculus, whom Tacitus sarcastically describes as "a keen *garrison* soldier," really possessed the deciding voice. At a council of war Paulinus and his colleagues wisely urged that no general engagement should be risked until the arrival of the legions from the Danube; but Otho, swayed by Titianus and Proculus, and impatient to decide his fate, cast

his vote for an immediate advance. The object, according to Tacitus, was to turn the flank of the Vitellian position at Cremona and sever its communications—a desperate move at the best, since the south bank of the Po would then be held only by a corps of gladiators, who had already been worsted on an island in mid-stream by a body of Batavian auxiliaries. The decisive battle was fought on April 15, outside the walls of Cremona.[1] It resolved itself into a series of disconnected conflicts in the woods and vineyards which bordered the high-road and on the causeway itself. Both sides fought desperately, but at length the Othonian generals took flight, the cry of treachery was raised, and the beaten army fled to Betriacum, and surrendered at discretion on the following morning. Otho, who had taken no part in the fighting, received the news at Brixellum, a small town on the right bank of the Po. His friends begged him to rest his hopes on the army of the Danube, whose advance-guard was rapidly approaching, and the remnant of the prætorians who protected his person professed themselves willing to shed their last drop of blood in his cause. But Otho's mind was made up. Tacitus has put into his mouth a speech which is perhaps to be regarded rather as a triumph of literary art than as a faithful abstract of the truth. In it he professes his readiness to die. "Fortune and I," he says, "have learnt to know each other. . . . Others may have held empire longer than I: but of me it shall be said that no one has laid it aside with greater courage. . . .

[1] This is commonly, but wrongly, called the first battle of Betriacum.

I make no complaints: only those who cling to life rail against God and man." At night he placed a dagger beneath his pillow, and at daybreak on the 17th of April ended his life by an act which the Romans regarded as heroic, but which moderns tend to consider selfish. Two days afterwards, Vitellius was recognised as Emperor by the Senate.

The new *princeps* moved slowly through Gaul and met his victorious lieutenants at Lyons. He used his power, on the whole, with moderation, and spared Otho's friends, many of whom, it is to be feared, were also his betrayers. He disbanded the guards and replaced them by sixteen (instead of twelve) cohorts drawn from the pick of the Germanic legions, while the Italian towns (and even Rome itself) were exposed to the licence of the Vitellian army, perhaps 100,000 strong. In his administration Vitellius showed deference to the Senate and attempted to dissociate himself from the Julian dynasty. He never adopted the cognomen Cæsar, and for some time refused the title of Augustus, but accepted that of "perpetual consul" because of its Republican sound. But he forfeited respect by his gluttony and extravagance, and his adherents made haste to enrich themselves at the public expense.

Whilst the Western armies had set up three Emperors in succession, the legions on the Euphrates frontier had remained unmoved. The chief command in the East was held by C. Licinius Mucianus, governor of Syria, an aristocrat, a diplomatist, and a man of culture, but the most experienced general in that

region was T. Flavius Vespasianus, whose military ability, proved in the early campaigns in Britain, had raised him from an obscure position to the consulship. He had been placed by Nero in command of Judæa as a separate province, in order that he might crush the Jewish rebellion (p. 108), and his task was only half completed. Mucianus, his only possible rival, urged him to strike a blow for empire and promised his aid. Vespasian at first hesitated, but his scruples were overcome, and Tiberius Julius Alexander, the viceroy of Egypt, proclaimed him Emperor at Alexandria on July 1. Mucianus did the same in the theatre at Antioch, and within a month the Roman East acknowledged Vespasian as its ruler, and the client-kings of Rome placed their forces at his disposal. At a council of war held at Berytus (Beyrout) it was decided that Vespasian should occupy Egypt and withhold the corn supply of Rome, while Mucianus marched westwards through Asia Minor; in the meantime Titus, the son of Vespasian, was to take command in the Jewish war.

Thus began the final struggle between the armies of the East and West, whose intensity revealed only too plainly the absence of a common patriotism in the defenders of the Empire, and showed that nothing but loyalty to an established dynasty could hold together so heterogeneous a body as the Imperial army. Tacitus mentions a rumour that the forces of Otho and Vitellius had debated for a brief moment whether they should lay aside their arms and unite in the choice of an Emperor, but

he rejects the story on the ground that armies so distinct in language and customs could never have met on common ground. And Mucianus had little difficulty in persuading the Syrian legions to espouse the cause of Vespasian by telling them that it was Vitellius' intention to transfer them to the Rhine and to quarter the Germanic army in the luxurious barrack-stations of Syria, which they regarded as their home. Not more than 20,000 men, however, accompanied him on his march through Cappadocia and Phrygia, for he justly relied on the army of the Danube, which had been baulked of its purpose by Otho's untimely suicide. Mucianus was anxious to avoid, if possible, the hazard of battle with the victorious legions of the Rhine and hoped to starve Italy into submission. He therefore summoned the Black Sea fleet to Byzantium, intending to use it for the blockade of the Italian coasts, and extorted vast sums of money—"the sinews of civil war," he called it—by fair means and foul from the provincials of Asia.

But the Illyrian legions had taken matters into their own hands. The moving spirit was Antonius Primus, a soldier of fortune, who saw in civil war the means of hiding an ugly past. Galba had placed him in command of a legion which he had levied in Spain (*VII Galbiana*, now called *Gemina*) and had afterwards sent to Pannonia. A council of war was held at Pœtovio (Pettau), the head-quarters of the Thirteenth Legion, and Primus, by an impassioned harangue, evoked the enthusiasm of his hearers, and carried the day for an immediate

invasion of Italy. An urgent summons was sent to the Mœsian legions, the defence of the Danube was left to the Iazyges, a barbarous tribe living between that river and the Theiss, and the march began. Primus with the advance-guard crossed the passes of the Julian Alps, occupied Aquileia, and pressed on towards Verona, surprising a small detachment of Vitellian troops on the Adige. Cæcina, who was in sole command of Vitellius' army owing to the illness of Valens, held the line of the Po from Cremona to Hostilia, in front of which town his forces were encamped in a strong position, covered by the river Tartarus and the marshes. But he was plotting treason against Vitellius, and had already induced Lucilius Bassus, the commander of the fleet at Ravenna, to desert to Vespasian. He made no effort to relieve Verona, and when the Flavian army of five legions had effected its concentration, openly endeavoured to persuade his men to betray the cause of Vitellius. They were resolved, however, to try the issue of battle with their rivals from the Danube, and having placed Cæcina under arrest, marched to join their comrades at Cremona. Primus felt that not a moment was to be lost, and set out from Verona, reaching Betriacum on the second day's march. Pushing on with a body of cavalry and auxiliaries, he successfully engaged a body of the enemy, although reinforced by the two legions which were holding Cremona. As the shades of evening fell the main body of his army joined him and endeavoured to be led against the walls

s appealed to his men to desist from the hardy attempt; but even his influence failed restrain them. Suddenly the news arrived that the six legions from Hostilia had arrived at Cremona, and that the whole Vitellian army, at least 50,000 strong, was advancing to the attack. Weary, cold, and hungry—they had marched thirty miles that day—the troops who had refused to betray their Emperor flung themselves on the Flavian army of five legions which was posted astride the Postumian Way. All through the winter's night the blind fury of a soldiers' battle raged without ceasing: the moon rose late on the eastern horizon and shone on the faces of the Vitellians, making them an easier mark. As the day dawned the Third Legion,[1] which had belonged to the Syrian army and had served with Corbulo in Armenia, saluted the divinity of the rising sun, and a rumour spread through the ranks that Mucianus had arrived. At length the Vitellians broke and fled to their camp at Cremona. But the Flavians were not to be denied. They stormed the camp, and Cremona capitulated. Primus, however, could not, perhaps would not, compel his soldiers to keep their faith; and for four days the unhappy city was given over to fire and sword, till the victorious legions had sated their lust of plunder and only a single temple survived the flames.

The victory was decisive. Valens, indeed, hearing ews in Etruria, took ship for Southern Gaul,

[1] *Gallica*, to be distinguished from *Legio III Augusta*, ntly quartered in Africa (p. 282).

HISTORICAL COINS—B.C. 27 A.D. 68.

1. Coin of Augustus with Sphinx (the symbol used on his signet, *cf.* Suet. *Aug.* 50).
2. Coin of Augustus with legend LIBERTATIS P(opuli) R(omani) VINDEX (p. 4).
3. Coin of Claudius with Prætorian Camp and IMP(eratore) RECEPT(o).
4. Coin of Nero with Temple of Janus.
5. Coin with portrait of Volusius Saturninus, Proconsul of Africa (*cf.* p. 11).
6. Coin of Clodius with PROPRAE (tor) AFRICAE (p. 84).

but was captured at sea near the Iles d'Hyères by order of the governor of Narbonensis. Vitellius could still rely on the new guard, which embraced the flower of the Germanic legions, and sent the greater part to occupy the passes of the Apennines near Foligno. But the fleet at Misenum deserted his cause, Campania and Central Italy followed suit, and when Primus, struggling through the winter snows, reached Narnia, the prætorians, on seeing the head of Valens, made their peace with the Flavian leader.

Primus now opened negotiations with Vitellius through Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, who was prefect of the city; and the Emperor agreed to abdicate. But his adherents, though few in numbers—only three cohorts of the guard remained in Rome—had the courage of despair. They compelled Vitellius to remain in the palace and attacked Sabinus, who took refuge in the Capitol. After a desperate struggle the Vitellians succeeded in setting fire to the buildings on the summit of the hill, and the temple of Jupiter was burnt to the ground. Sabinus was taken and killed in defiance of Vitellius' orders, and the Flavian advance-guard of 1,000 cavalry was beaten off. The fate of the Vitellians was now sealed. The Flavian army advanced on Rome in three columns, while the supporters of Vitellius armed the city mob, even the slaves, and prepared to fight to the bitter end. Inch by inch they were forced back till the enemy made entrance into the city by the Colline Gate, as Cinna had done in the first civil

war. The fighting went on from street to street and from house to house, while the idle populace looked on and applauded at the greatest gladiatorial show that Rome had seen: it is said that as many as 50,000 lives were lost. Vitellius was dragged from his place of hiding and put to death with every insult on the Gemonian stairs. At length the prætorian barracks were stormed and the last of the Vitellians were put to the sword. But, as Tacitus puts it, "though war was over, peace had not begun." For the Flavian leaders were powerless to check the licence of their followers, and Rome suffered the fate of a captured city.

The Senate lost no time in conferring the powers of the principate upon Vespasian, who with his son Titus was designated consul for A.D. 70. The prætorship (with consular power) was bestowed on his second son, Domitian, who had barely escaped with his life from the burning Capitol, and was now installed in the palace and absorbed in pleasure, while Primus held the reins of government. Soon, however, Mucianus, who had been obliged to repel an incursion of Dacians and Roxolani on the Danube in the course of his march, arrived in Rome and made his strong hand felt. The Illyrian legions were dismissed to their stations, Primus and his fellow-leaders were reduced to subordinate positions, and Rome awaited its Emperor in peace.

But though the Roman world was united beneath the sway of a new master, there was hard fighting to be done before peace reigned within its borders. Whilst the Jewish rebellion was taxing the military

resources of Rome in the East, a grave danger threatened the Rhine frontier and North-Eastern Gaul. The Roman army, it will be remembered, consisted in large part of "auxiliary" troops levied from the subject peoples, who were thus gradually absorbed into the ruling race. It was a bold and liberal policy, which had hitherto proved successful, since the loyalty of the auxiliaries had been unquestioned. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that there was danger of friction between these troops and the legions, who enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship, and this was the more likely to arise in the case of corps which were officered not by Romans, but by leaders of their own nationality. Amongst these were the cohorts of Batavians, whose home was in the delta of the Rhine. The Batavians paid no tribute to Rome, but were subject to the "blood-tax," which drew the flower of their youth to serve in the Roman cavalry. Eight of these regiments, which had won distinction in the conquest of Britain, had been recalled by Nero at the close of his reign, and had become disaffected because two of their leaders were falsely accused of treason. They quarrelled with the soldiers of the Fourteenth Legion, with which they were brigaded, fought against the legion at Betriacum, and when ordered to accompany it back to Britain, refused to obey and marched to Moguntiacum (Mainz).

The struggle between Vitellius and Vespasian was just beginning, and Antonius Primus, anxious to prevent reinforcements reaching his opponents from the Rhine, entered into correspondence with the

Batavian cohorts and also with Julius Civilis, one of the officers accused of treason, who had been released by Galba and was now in his native country. Civilis, a leader of no ordinary capacity, at once raised the standard of revolt in the name of Vespasian, overpowered and dislodged the Roman garrisons in the Rhine delta, and captured part of the river flotilla. The situation was grave, for the bulk of the Germanic legions were fighting in Italy and the camps on the Rhine were held by skeleton regiments largely composed of recruits. If the revolt should spread to the tribes of Germany and Gaul, Roman rule in the North would be seriously imperilled, and Civilis, though nominally acting for Vespasian, in reality harboured the design of throwing off the Roman yoke. The four legions of the Lower Province were distributed as follows: two at Vetera (Xanten), one at Novæsium (Neuss), and one at Bonna (Bonn); in Upper Germany the force within striking distance consisted of the two legions encamped at Moguntiacum. Here the commander-in-chief of the Rhine army, Hordeonius Flaccus, had his headquarters. He was not merely aged and incapable, but probably also secretly disloyal to Vitellius. He allowed the Batavian cohorts to leave his camp with the avowed intention of joining Civilis, and sent contradictory messages to Herennius Gallus, who was in command at Bonna. The result was that they defeated Gallus' legionaries, who endeavoured to bar their progress, and proceeded to join their countrymen. Meanwhile Civilis, who had been joined by bands of Germans, defeated the Roman

legions to the north of Vetera and blockaded them in their camp. Flaccus could not but march to their relief, and a large force, including Gallic auxiliaries, was concentrated at Gelduba (Gellep), a little to the north of Novæsium, and placed under the command of Dillius Vocula, the *legatus* of the Twenty-second Legion. Here the troops learnt that the Vitellians had been annihilated at Cremona, and were forced to take the oath of allegiance to Vespasian.

Then Civilis threw off the mask and attempted to surprise Vocula at Gelduba. The timely arrival of some Spanish auxiliaries converted impending disaster into victory, and Vetera was relieved, but only for a time. Shortly afterwards a mutiny broke out at Novæsium; Flaccus was murdered and Vitellius again proclaimed Emperor, although he was in reality dead. The legions of the Upper Province, however, were faithful to Vespasian and marched to the relief of Moguntiacum, which was hard pressed by the Germans.

The struggle for independence now took a new and alarming shape. The news of the burning of the Capitol was interpreted by the Druids as a token of the impending fall of Rome, and a conspiracy was formed with the aim of establishing an "Empire of the Gauls" as the rival of Rome, whose world-power, it was believed, the Northern nations were destined to inherit. The leaders of this movement were three men whose names recalled the conquests of the great Dictator—Julius Classicus and Julius Tutor, belonging to the tribe of the Treveri, and Julius Sabinus, who claimed to be descended from

Cæsar, of the tribe of the Lingones. Classicus and Tutor induced Vocula by false promises to march once more to the relief of Vetera. He fell into the trap and was murdered at Novæsium, after his troops had taken the oath of allegiance to the "Empire of the Gauls"; and their example was soon followed by the two legions at Mainz and the remnant which still held out at Vetera. The permanent camps—except that at Moguntiacum—were dismantled and burnt, and the capital of the new Empire was fixed at Augusta Treverorum (Trèves). Cologne was saved from destruction by the intervention of Veleda, a German prophetess, who inhabited a solitary tower on the river Lippe and had gained authority with the rebels by foretelling their success.

But the Empire of the Gauls soon proved to be a baseless fabric. Civilis and the Batavians, who contributed largely to the fighting strength of the rebels, had no mind to put their necks under the Gallic yoke, and stood aloof from the scheme. Nor did it meet with support except in the north-east. Sabinus failed hopelessly in an attempt to coerce the Sequani (in Franche-Comté), and was forced to take refuge in a subterranean chamber, where he lay hid for five years, and was then discovered and put to death. A conference of Gallic tribes was held at Durocortorum (Reims), and the choice between "liberty or peace" was debated. The majority for peace was overwhelming, and included those tribes which had taken part in the revolt of Vindex. Thus the Treveri and Lingones were left to face the power

of Rome with a few German allies, and their doom was sealed.

An army of six legions was now formed, and the command was given to Petillius Cerealis, a connection of Vespasian. The Gauls made no attempt to close the Alpine passes, and as the Roman forces advanced from Vindonissa (Windisch), the headquarters of the Twenty-first Legion, the enemy retired northwards, and the legionaries who had declared for the Gallic Empire under stress of necessity began to return to their allegiance. Learning that the two legions which had been quartered in Trèves had deserted the cause of Classicus and Tutor and marched to Metz, Cerealis advanced against the city, and after capturing a strong position about ten miles distant, entered it without fighting. He rejected with contempt the offers of empire made to him by the insurgents, and relied on the disunion of his enemies to do his work. He was justified by the event. Civilis wished to delay the decisive battle until reinforcements should arrive from beyond the Rhine; but Tutor, who was for taking the offensive, carried the day, and an attempt was made to surprise the Roman camp on the left bank of the Moselle by a night attack. It was almost successful, but Cerealis, with admirable presence of mind, rallied his men, and the insurgents were routed. The way was now clear to the lower Rhine, and Cerealis, having mustered the full strength of his army, engaged Civilis at Vetera, and won a victory after hard fighting. Civilis now destroyed the dam, begun by Drusus but not

finished until A.D. 55, which had forced the waters of the Rhine into the eastern channel. They now plunged once more into the western channel (the Vahalis, modern Waal), and formed a line of defence for the "island of the Batavians." Fighting followed at several points, and Cerealis was successful, rather by good luck than by generalship, in forcing Civilis to retire beyond the true Rhine and leave the homes of his countrymen at his mercy. Then they realised that the power of the Roman legions was too strong for them, and made their peace. Cerealis and Civilis held a parley from the extremities of a bridge broken in the centre, and the Batavian hero vanished from the stage of history.[1]

Tacitus puts into the mouth of Cerealis a speech, supposed to be delivered at Trèves, which is in reality an *apologia* for Roman rule. The fabric of an empire compacted by the traditions of eight hundred years, he says, cannot be dissolved without bringing ruin on those who destroy it, and plunging the subject races—who, indeed, have long since come to take their share in ruling—into the war of all against all which was once their normal state. This was no more than the truth, and the recognition of it saved Rome then and for some centuries to come. But the Imperial government had learnt its lesson. The system of clan regiments under native leaders was given up—except for certain irregular corps with special equipment, such as the Balearic slingers—

[1] Of his ultimate fate we know nothing. The mutilated narrative of Tacitus breaks off in the midst of Civilis' speech, in which he is made to pose as a recognised agent of Vespasian.

and the auxiliary troops not only ceased to be homogeneous in nationality, but were transferred to stations distant from those in which they were raised. Four at least of the disloyal legions were disbanded and in part replaced by new corps (see below, p. 119).

The Jewish rising was far less dangerous, but at the same time more obstinate From the time of Julius Cæsar the Jews had been treated with favour by Rome. Not only were they allowed the free exercise of their religion, but they were specially exempted from duties conflicting therewith, such as military service and the obligation to appear in court on the Sabbath. Under the successors of Augustus the Jews in Rome—many of whom had become by manumission Roman citizens, but still claimed their national privileges, while others had adopted Judaism as their religion and expected to be released from their former obligations—more than once came into collision with the government, and were expelled from the city. But the Jews in the East suffered no interference with their religious liberties, save for the abortive attempt of Gaius to introduce the Imperial worship into the Temple.

It proved impossible, however, to divorce religion from politics in dealing with a people whose traditions were theocratic. Augustus had found an easy solution of the problem in the maintenance of Herod the Great as a vassal king in Judæa; but his successors proved intractable. The kingdom of Herod was divided into tetrarchies, and Judæa became a province ruled by an Imperial procurator. For a

short time that astute adventurer, Agrippa I., who played so prominent a part in the elevation of Claudius to the principate, succeeded in reconstituting the kingdom of his grandfather; but when he died, in A.D. 44, Claudius once more placed Judæa under the direct rule of a procurator, and Agrippa II., although by adroit flattery of the Emperors he was able to secure the title of king and the possession of no inconsiderable territory, never reigned in Jerusalem, though he was trustee for the Temple treasures and was permitted to nominate the high priest.

Under the rule of the procurators discontent grew apace. For this there were economic reasons in the pressure of taxation, which drove numbers of Jews to adopt the profession of brigandage and rendered life and property unsafe. But behind the thirst for plunder lurked a religious fanaticism which was still more dangerous. The Romans maintained the ascendancy of the Sadducean aristocracy, but the democratic party of the Pharisees, condemned to political impotence, fed the religious sentiment of the masses with hopes of independence, and fanned the flames of hatred against Rome. They themselves would never have courted disaster by allowing this discontent to break out in open revolt, but they were destined to taste the bitter fruit which falls to the lot of the theoricians who foment the outbreak of revolutions but cannot control their course. As time went on the masses turned to the party of action, or Zealots, who trusted that the Lord of Hosts would once more bare His arm as in the

days of old and deliver Israel from the oppressor, and in the meanwhile harried peaceful travellers on the high-roads of Palestine and formed secret revolutionary tribunals which condemned obnoxious persons to perish by the dagger of the assassin.

The crisis came in the procuratorship of Gessius Florus (64–66 A.D.), whose duty it became to communicate to the inhabitants of Cæsarea the decision of the home government that Jews were not entitled to civic rights in that community. A tumult arose, and the Jews were massacred by the Greeks; but at the same time the Zealots got the upper hand in Jerusalem, cut to pieces the Roman garrison, and slew the leaders of the moderate party and some Roman residents who had capitulated on the assurance that their lives would be spared. Naturally enough, the Greek population in such cities as Damascus were not slow to take vengeance, and sacked the Jewish quarters, massacring the inhabitants; there was serious rioting, too, at Alexandria. Cestius Gallus, the *legatus* of Syria, marched against Jerusalem, but was repulsed with heavy loss, and it became evident that a serious war lay before the Romans. An army of 50,000 men, including three legions and contingents of Imperial service troops from the protected states, was gathered at Ptolemais in A.D. 67. Vespasian took the command, and proceeded slowly but surely to reduce the outlying districts. In the campaign of A.D. 67 he regained the whole of Galilee and the sea-coast, and in the following year overran the districts beyond Jordan and occupied Samaria and Jericho,

Photo] *[Alinari.*

VESPASIAN.

(*Museo delle Terme, Rome.*)

driving the homeless population to take refuge in the overcrowded city of Jerusalem. He was preparing for a final advance against the Holy City when the news of Nero's fall reached Palestine. The civil wars which followed gave the Jews a long respite, and when Vespasian left the East for Rome he left his son Titus to end the war (A.D. 70), placing an overwhelming force—six legions, twenty-eight auxiliary regiments, and other corps—at his disposal. All this while Jerusalem had been torn by factions; at one time, indeed, three rival parties at deadly enmity amongst themselves held the Temple, the outer court, and the hill of Zion, and if Titus had chosen to let strife and hunger take their course he might soon have reduced the Jews to submission; but he was ambitious of military fame, and determined to storm the all but impregnable defences of Jerusalem, rising tier after tier in face of the attacking force, which could only deliver its assault from the north. The first wall was soon breached by the Roman engines, but this gave access only to the new city. Titus then offered terms to the defenders, and, when they were scornfully rejected, closely invested the city and reduced the inhabitants to the extremity of famine. After three months the second wall was carried, and this success was followed by the capture of the tower of Antony, which overlooked the Temple. Still the Zealots refused to surrender, and fortified the Temple and its porches. At length the Romans set fire to the northern portico, and by this means were enabled to make entrance into the enclosure.

The Zealot leaders, however, escaped by a high causeway (which they broke down behind them) into the upper city of Zion, leaving the priests and the people to be massacred amidst the flames which consumed the Temple and its treasures. Mount Zion was too strong to be carried by direct assault, but famine and faction at last made further resistance impossible. The leaders, John of Giscala and Simon of Gerasa, with the extreme fanatics, hid themselves in the underground passages which honeycombed the hill, and the Romans became masters of Jerusalem (September 2, A.D. 70). It is said that 1,000,000 Jews perished in this, perhaps the most awful siege in history, and that 100,000 were sold into slavery by Titus. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the camp of the Tenth Legion was pitched upon its site. The high priest and the Sanhedrin were abolished, and, politically speaking, the Jewish nation ceased to exist; but the religious privileges above mentioned might still be enjoyed by registered Jews who took out a yearly licence, paying a fee of two denarii, which, instead of enriching the Temple treasury at Jerusalem, went to that of Jupiter on the Capitol. Thus an eminently practical solution was found for the Jewish problem, and Titus returned to Rome to celebrate a triumph commemorated by the most familiar of Rome's arches (A.D. 71).

IV

THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY

THE strife of the legions had left the Empire torn and bleeding, and there was need of a firm hand to bind up its wounds. Vespasian was well fitted for the work which lay before him. He was before all things a soldier, and no one but a soldier could hope to weld into one the discordant elements of the army and create a force which could be trusted to hold Rome's enemies in check without threatening her own security. Moreover, he brought to the task of ruling the sane mind and sound blood of an Italian farmer, rating at its true value the aristocracy of the capital, which had been weighed in the balance and found wanting in the crisis of 68–70 A.D. Neither the courtiers of Nero, enervated by the refinements of luxury and vice, nor such pedantic slaves of obsolete tradition as Galba, were fitted to deal with the problems of the time. The life of the Empire was no longer centred in the capital, and Vespasian directly represented that Italian race which reigned but did not govern. It must not, however, be thought that the simplicity of manners and

shrewd common sense which he inherited from his Sabine ancestors implied an entire lack of culture. He spoke and wrote Greek fluently, and though his wit was homely and even coarse, he was not without intellectual interests, and endowed education by paying salaries from the Imperial treasury to professors of Greek and Latin oratory. Finally, he inherited from his father, who had begun his career as a tax-farmer in Asia and ended it as a money-lender in Switzerland, no small measure of financial ability, which was sorely needed in the crisis brought about by the extravagance of Nero and the waste of civil war.

The constitutional question was speedily settled. Vespasian had no intention of sharing the realities of power with the Senate, or even of seeking in its recognition the source of his title to the principate. In December, A.D. 69, on the death of Vitellius, the Senate registered the formal decree by which the powers of the *princeps* were defined, and in the following January a law was passed by the assembly giving effect to the Senate's resolution. The concluding portion of this law is preserved to us in the inscription on a bronze tablet discovered in the fourteenth century and set up by Rienzi in St. John Lateran, but long since transferred to the Capitoline Museum. The extant clauses deal with the miscellaneous powers attaching to the principate, and illustrate the gradual accretion of such rights. Then we find that Claudius was the first Emperor authorised to "extend the *pomerium*" or ideal boundary dividing the peace of Rome from the outer world of

war (*militia*), and that Vespasian was invested with an unlimited right of "commending," *i.e.* designating, candidates for the magistracies of the state. In conclusion, the acts done by Vespasian previously to the passing of the law receive a retrospective ratification "as though they had been performed by authority of the people or the *plebs*," but the utter insignificance of this formality, and indeed of the whole act of legislation, becomes apparent when we recall the fact that Vespasian was careful to date his accession (the *dies imperii*) from July 1, A.D. 68, the day on which he was saluted as *Imperator* by the legions at Alexandria.

Vespasian also made it clear from the first that it was his intention to found a dynasty. "Either my sons shall succeed me or no one," he is reported to have said, and the titles which he conferred upon them left no room for uncertainty. Since the extinction of the Julio-Claudian house the distinctive title of the Emperor had been left to the caprice of the rulers who had ascended the throne in rapid succession. Vespasian created a permanent type by adopting the *praenomina* "Imperator Cæsar," and the *cognomen* "Augustus," between which the names of the individual ruler found a place, and the title of Cæsar, with its unmistakable significance, was bestowed on both the sons of the Emperor in A.D. 69. For Titus, however, was reserved the honour of co-regency. In the early part of A.D. 71 he was, by a curious innovation, entitled "Imperator designatus," but on the 1st of July, the second anniversary of his father's accession, his position was

made regular by the bestowal of the *tribunicia potestas* and proconsular *imperium*. Domitian received the title of "*Princeps iuventutis*," and the other distinctions which under the Julio-Claudian dynasty had marked out princes in the direct line of succession; but he was treated as inferior to Titus in official precedence, and the foundations of a deep-seated jealousy between the brothers were thus laid.

The reign was inaugurated by a series of brilliant and impressive ceremonies. In A.D. 70 (before the return of Vespasian from the East) the foundation-stone of a new temple to Jupiter Capitolinus were laid with solemn ritual on the site of that which had been burnt by the Vitellians. In the following year Titus celebrated his Jewish triumph, and the temple of Janus was closed in token that peace reigned throughout the Empire. The Golden Age of Augustus seemed to have returned, and Vespasian set himself to the task of consolidating the fabric which Augustus had raised.

In A.D. 73 he assumed the censorship jointly with Titus. The precedent of Claudius was doubtless present to his mind; indeed, Vespasian's policy recalls that of Claudius in more than one respect, and as he was not a man of original ideas, it is very probable that this is no accident. The financial problem was (next to that of the army) the most difficult which he had to face. After examining the balance-sheet of the Empire, he stated that forty thousand million sesterces (£400,000,000) were needed to place the state in a solvent position, and the census enabled him to gauge the taxable

resources of the Empire, which were then exploited to the uttermost in order to meet the necessary expenses of administration and replenish the exhausted treasury. The strictest control was exercised over the financial officials, and after a close investigation of titles, lands were recovered and immunities withdrawn from those who were in unlawful enjoyment of them. It need hardly be said that Vespasian incurred great unpopularity by these measures, but, like the shrewd man of business he was, he did not rest until the finances of Rome were placed on a sound footing.

With the census went the revision of the roll of the Senate, and the Emperor was able, by exercising his right of *adlectio* (see p. 64), to reward merit and infuse new blood into that body. We do not know whether this power was largely exercised or not; as a matter of fact, Vespasian was able by his control of the elections to magistracies to determine the composition of the Senate; but it is certain that under the Flavian Emperors a new aristocracy gradually replaced that which its inherent corruption and the sword of the executioner had brought low. Like Claudius, Vespasian created a number of new patrician families, so that the ancient priesthoods of Rome might not want holders; for in his religious conservatism he followed strictly in Augustus' steps. But nothing availed to conciliate the Senate; and Vespasian was forced to learn that no members of an aristocracy are more jealous of its privileges or more tenacious of its traditions than those who have been newly admitted to its ranks. It is true that he

suspended the operation of the law of treason, which since the reign of Tiberius had been the most dreaded weapon of the Imperial government; but he was firm in his refusal to allow the Senate to wreak its vengeance on the informers who had flourished under Nero, and the breach thus caused was never healed. There may also have been some discontent with the practice instituted by Vespasian, but not destined to survive his dynasty, by which the first (or ordinary) consulship of each year, whose holders took office on the 1st of January and gave their name to the year, was almost always held by the Emperor and his relations, so that an empty but coveted honour was denied to the aristocracy. Thus, although open opposition was non-existent and in fact impossible, a clique of *frondeurs*, most of whom professed Stoic principles, were at little pains to conceal their dissatisfaction with the government, and, seeing that they had no longer a Nero or a Tigellinus to fear, talked more or less open Republicanism. The chief of these was Helvidius Priscus, the son-in-law of Nero's victim, Thrasea Pætus, and the natural heir to a position which we can scarcely honour with the name of party leadership. He was less prudent and less dignified than his father-in-law, while equally destitute of constructive ideas—for the cult of Cato and Brutus certainly does not deserve to be so entitled—and perhaps deserves to be remembered chiefly as the subject of the immortal epigram in which Tacitus describes the love of fame as the last infirmity of philosophic minds. Ultimately Vespasian banished him from Rome, then ordered him

to be put to death, and finally attempted (when too late) to cancel the order. We do not know the rights of the case, but it is fair to say that the Emperor's detractors—the party to whom Helvidius was a saint and martyr—never questioned his reluctance to inflict the penalty of death. He expelled the professors of Stoic and Cynic philosophy from Rome, since they kept up a ceaseless agitation against his government; but when the most violent of them, a Greek named Demetrius, refused to abate his tirades against monarchy, Vespasian merely said: "I never kill a barking dog." It is likely enough, therefore, that Helvidius may have given ground for the suspicion that he was engaged in treasonable conspiracy. Vespasian's life was, indeed, threatened by conspirators more than once, and he was warned by the events of A.D. 65 (p. 81) that the danger might be grave if the loyalty of the guard were undermined. When, therefore, he disbanded the sixteen prætorian cohorts which Vitellius had raised from the German legions and returned to the system of Augustus, forming nine new regiments recruited chiefly in Italy, he placed them at first under the command of Arrecinus Clemens, the brother of his first wife, and afterwards under that of his own son Titus.

But Vespasian's chief work was done in distant provinces. He knew by personal experience the position on Rome's Eastern frontier, and set himself to place its defences on a firm footing. It was no longer sufficient to maintain an army corps of four legions under the command of the governor of Syria, while leaving the passages of the upper Euphrates

and the approaches of the Mesopotamian desert to the protection of vassal-sheikhs and local levies. At the close of the Parthian war under Nero, Polemon II., the ruler of Pontus, a territory on the shores of the Black Sea whose capital was Trapezus (Trebizond), was forced to resign his kingdom and perhaps consoled with a petty principality in Cilicia, while Aristobulus, a descendant of Herod the Great who ruled in Lesser Armenia (west of the Euphrates), was likewise dispossessed and probably transferred to Chalcis, a small territory in North-eastern Syria. Thus direct Roman rule was extended to the banks of the upper Euphrates; but there were no permanent garrisons in the newly-acquired territories, for whose defence the governor of Galatia was responsible. Vespasian put an end to this state of things. Apparently two important stations were created at Satala (north of Erzinjan) and Melitene (Malatia) and garrisoned each by a legion.[1] These two points served as bases for an advance into Armenia, and were connected by a military road; further south, the client-kingdom of Commagene, which Gaius had restored to Antiochus, the king deposed by Tiberius (p. 47), was finally annexed to the province of Syria, and one of the new legions created by Vespasian (p. 106) after the revolt of the Rhine (*XVI Flavia Firma*) was (as it would seem) posted at Samosata (Samsat) to guard the passage

[1] Josephus tells us that the Twelfth Legion (*Fulminata*) was stationed at Melitene in A.D. 70, and the Fifteenth (*Apollinaris*), which seems to have left its camp at Carnuntum on the Danube in A.D. 73, was most probably then transferred to Satala.

of the Euphrates. One of the legions forming the garrison of Syria (*X Fretensis*) was placed under the command of the *legatus* of the new province of Judæa and encamped on the site of Jerusalem. The mountainous districts of Cilicia, hitherto governed by friendly dynasts, were united with the sea-board of the province, and the principalities on the fringe of Syria were doomed to gradual extinction. The fruits of this policy were seen in the almost unbroken peace which reigned for the half-century following Nero's wars with Parthia. It is true that the Parthian court gave a ready welcome to political fugitives, such as the sons of Antiochus of Commagene, and lent its support to more than one of the pretenders who masqueraded under the name of Nero; and the father of Trajan, when governor of Syria, was rewarded with the insignia of a triumph for successes whose nature is uncertain, gained on the Eastern frontier. But these war-clouds were soon dispersed, and Rome was free to deal with a fresh danger threatening her Black Sea provinces from beyond the Caucasus—the incursions of the Alani, a people of horsemen armed with the lasso, who roamed the steppes between the Caspian and the Don and were destined to give serious trouble to the Romans and their Eastern neighbours. Nero is said to have planned an expedition against them in the closing year of his reign, and under the Flavian dynasty their raids into Armenia led to the establishment of a Roman post near Tiflis.

Vespasian also found work to his hand on the Rhine and Danube frontiers. In the first place it

was necessary to replace the garrisons whose loyalty had been found wanting in the revolt of Civilis by a new army. Three legions were now thought sufficient to hold Lower Germany; two of them, the sixth and tenth, had come from Spain to join Cerealis' army, the third was the twenty-second, which had, it is true, for a time supported the Empire of the Gauls, but was spared disbandment in memory of the loyalty of Vocula and the services which the legion had rendered to Cerealis. In Upper Germany the double camp at Mainz was held by two legions as before, while a third was stationed at Argentoratum (Strassburg) and a fourth at Vindonissa (Windisch). The two last were transferred from the Danube region. But these points were designed to serve as bases supporting an advance beyond the Rhine and Danube, which formed a re-entrant angle in the Roman frontier.[1] The valley of the Neckar and the Black Forest had long been no man's land. Until almost 100 B.C. they had been inhabited by Celts; but the Celts gave way to the hordes of Cimbri and Teutones who came so near to destroying Rome and her civilisation. After the Cimbri came the Suevi under Ariovistus, who were crushed by Cæsar in the first year of his Gallic war; and the Marcomanni, who occupied the basin of the Neckar in Augustus' reign, had trekked eastward and found a new home in Bohemia. A few remnants of the peoples we have named were still to be found here and there, but as a whole the district lay desolate,

[1] Tacitus expresses this by calling the district whose annexation is described in the text "an inlet of the Empire" (*sinus imperii*).

and Vespasian determined to annex it to the Empire and thus strengthen one of the weakest links in the chain of defence. There is good, though indirect, evidence for the statement that in the years 73–74 A.D. there was hard fighting on the upper Rhine, as a result of which military honours and decorations were freely bestowed by the Emperor. It is not quite easy to see who was the enemy prepared to dispute with Rome the possession of this debateable territory; but it may be that some of the ever-restless German tribes from the north-east were making a descent upon the country, and were forestalled by Vespasian. Tacitus tells us that paths were cleared and garrisons moved forward; and we are able to show that from the bases at Strassburg and Windisch roads were carried into the heart of the Black Forest, meeting at Rottweil, and thence, perhaps (though this may have been somewhat later), prolonged to the Danube. The new territory was added to the crown domains of the Emperor and "tenants of Cæsar" were settled upon it. From the tenths which they paid the whole district came to be known as the "tithe-lands." Further to the East it was urgently necessary to make the Danube a true military frontier instead of that which it had been since Augustus, the political boundary of the Empire; for signs were not wanting that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe would soon become a grave menace to the security of the Roman dominions. Augustus had kept the bulk of the forces guarding the frontier provinces of Pannonia in the valley of the Drave, which forms a natural line of defence;

but under Claudius a legionary camp was created at Carnuntum (Petronell) on the upper Danube, although the station at Pœtovio (Pettau on the Drave) was still occupied, and the Romanisation of Pannonia proceeded rapidly. Vespasian now built a second camp at Vindobona (Vienna), which was garrisoned by the Thirteenth Legion, and in A.D. 73 the fifteenth (afterwards transferred to the East, see p. 119) rebuilt the camp at Carnuntum, which became a fortress of the first importance,[1] while Pœtovio was reduced to the position of a civil settlement. On the middle Danube two legions had for some time been stationed, perhaps at Singidunum (Belgrade) and Viminacium (Kostolatz); but the lower Danube had formed the boundary of the kingdom of Thrace so long as that existed, and since its annexation by Claudius native troops under Roman officers had sufficed for its defence. In A.D. 69 a presage of coming trouble was seen in the inroads of Dacians (from Transylvania), Roxolani (from the shores of the Black Sea), and Iazyges (from Hungary), which Mucianus was forced to repel in the course of his march to Italy. Vespasian removed the permanent garrison from the province of Dalmatia, now completely pacified, and stationed two legions (at least) on the lower Danube. The flotilla which patrolled the river—it appears from a passage of Tacitus that it already existed in A.D. 50—was reorganised under the title of the Flavian fleet (*classis Flavia*). Nevertheless, as we shall see,

[1] The remains of this camp are being gradually excavated, and are of the highest interest to students of Roman military history.

Vespasian underrated the dangers which threatened his Empire on this side.

In our own island the progress of Roman arms and manners was slow and chequered. In a previous chapter (p. 62), mention was made of the obstacles presented to the Roman advance by the hills of Derbyshire and Wales. Suetonius Paulinus, who became governor of Britain under Nero in A.D. 59, established his headquarters at Deva—"the camp" *par excellence*, as its modern name (Chester = *Castra*) implies; and having thus driven a wedge between the two areas in which resistance was most obstinate, pushed on in A.D. 61 to the island of Mona (Anglesey) in order to exterminate the Druids and destroy their worship. But he had reckoned too confidently on the pacific temper of the tribes inhabiting the districts first conquered, which had been given up to peaceful development by the withdrawal of the garrisons. A great revolt broke out in the east, where the Iceni were chafing under the exactions of Imperial tax-collectors and Roman money-lenders. Their queen, Boudicca, was subjected to indignity at the hands of the procurator, and the news of this set the east ablaze. The Roman colony of Camulodunum was taken, and its inhabitants, who took refuge in the temple of the Divine Claudius, were massacred without mercy. Petillius Cerealis, commanding the Ninth Legion, was defeated in a pitched battle by the insurgents, and could barely hold his own behind his entrenchments, while Londinium and Verulamium (St. Albans) fell a prey to the Britons, and hideous

scenes of massacre were enacted, in which some 70,000 Romans perished. The commander of the Second Legion, which was stationed at Isca (Caerleon-on-Usk) in order to hold the Silures in check, refused to march to the relief of Cerealis, and afterwards expiated his disobedience by suicide; but Suetonius, hastening back from Anglesey, was in time to save his subordinate, and utterly crushed the insurgents in a decisive battle fought near Colchester. Eighty thousand Britons fell, and Boudicca, having made her name immortal by the spirit which she had infused into her subjects and allies, preferred death to dishonour.

Nero soon recalled Suetonius, and his successors contented themselves with fostering the growth of a peaceful spirit in the lowland districts; but when Cerealis, after suppressing the revolt of Civilis, was sent by Vespasian to Britain as governor, he recommenced the forward movement and succeeded in pushing the frontier some distance further to the north; and Sex. Julius Frontinus, best known as a writer on military tactics and on the aqueducts of Rome, who succeeded Cerealis about A.D. 75, reduced the Silures in South Wales to subjection. In A.D. 78 Vespasian appointed to the governorship of Britain Gn. Julius Agricola, who had already served in the island both as military tribune and as commander of the Twentieth Legion, evidently in the belief that he would complete the work begun by his predecessors. We shall presently see how he acquitted himself of the task.

Thus the reign of Vespasian, though free from

great wars, was a time of considerable military activity, and the army seems to have been kept in a high state of efficiency. The most striking change which dates from his reign is the practical exclusion of Italians from service in the legions. Under the Julio-Claudian dynasty, while furnishing recruits to the Western legions, they were privileged in the sense of having the first claim to volunteer for the more attractive branches of the service, such as the guard and the "cohorts of Roman citizens," which ranked as auxiliaries; but from the accession of the Flavian dynasty onwards their privilege consisted rather in freedom from all but these forms of service; for in the decay of martial spirit amongst the Italians there can be no doubt that their virtual exclusion from the legions was prized as a favour rather than resented as a degradation. The Eastern and Western armies were still raised each from its own half of the Empire, but the Third Legion in Africa was supplied with recruits from the Eastern provinces. It has already been explained that the non-Roman "auxiliary" corps were sent to serve in regions distant from their own homes; thus on the annexation of Commagene a number of "cohorts of Commagenians" was formed out of the Imperial service troops previously maintained by Antiochus and incorporated in the army of the Danube or in the garrison of North Africa.

But, though primarily a soldier, Vespasian did not neglect any means by which the peaceful provinces of his Empire could be made to participate in Roman civilisation and Roman privileges. Like Claudius, he

was liberal in his grants of citizenship, and bestowed municipal charters upon a number of provincial cities; but he also took a further step in advance by conferring upon all the non-Roman towns in Spain the Latin right, which was the earnest of full citizenship. The privilege had been well earned, for Spain had, in fact, given birth to nearly all the leaders of the literary movement of the first century A.D., and was shortly to furnish an Emperor to Rome.

Lastly, Vespasian lost no time—when the finances of the Empire had been set in order—in filling the new Rome which was taking the place of that destroyed by Nero's fire with abiding monuments of his magnificence. The greater part of the Golden House of Nero was destroyed, and on the site of the chief of its lakes rose the great amphitheatre which, as legend has it, is destined to be coeval with Rome, and which the hand of Nature and man have not as yet availed to destroy. Not far from this Vespasian built the temple of Peace, of which not a trace now remains, but which was counted amongst the finest works of ancient architecture. It stood in a large *piazza* popularly known as the Forum of Peace, upon one side of which rose a building whose walls were faced with a marble plan of the new city. For Vespasian created a new Rome in the technical sense of the word by enlarging the ideal boundary of the *pomerium*, and the legend *Roma resurgens* appears upon his coinage.

Vespasian was sixty years old when he became Emperor, and his reign lasted for ten years, filled to

the last moment with strenuous work. The end came on June 23, A.D. 79. His last words were: "An Emperor must die standing"; but as he struggled to his feet death overtook him.

The accession of Titus was hailed with delight by society, the army, and the mob, for he had a passion for popularity which he indulged to the utmost. He was a man of very different mould from his father, and had been brought up amidst other surroundings, having spent his boyhood at the courts of Claudius and Nero as the playmate of Britannicus, where he became noted for his accomplishments and attractions. It must be allowed, however, that the reports of his personal beauty are somewhat tinged with flattery, for the unsparing fidelity of the Flavian artists reveals the fact that, without being frankly coarse in appearance, like Vespasian, he was at the most vulgarly good-looking. He was not lacking in soldierly qualities, as he showed in the siege of Jerusalem, but he was above all a man of pleasure, and undermined his constitution by self-indulgence. When commanding in the East he became enamoured of the Jewish princess Berenice, who came to Rome in A.D. 75 and was established as *maîtresse en titre*. It was the general belief that he had made promises of marriage to her, and the anti-Semitic feeling of the Romans was so revolted by this that Titus was forced to dismiss her. At the close of Vespasian's reign, however, she returned to Rome to play her last card, and it was whispered that the tragic end of Cæcina (the betrayer of Vitellius), who was stabbed as he left the Imperial supper-table, was

THE COLOSSEUM SEEN THROUGH THE ARCH OF TITUS.

the *dénoûment* of a drama in which Berenice played a leading *rôle*; the official version was that Cæcina had all but succeeded in a plot against the life of the crown prince. When Vespasian died, Roman society waited in breathless suspense for the next move; but Titus showed that he was ready to sacrifice even his mistress to his popularity, and this time the lovers' parting was final.

The reign of Titus was brief, for he died on September 13, A.D. 81, and we must be content to suspend judgment on his character as a ruler, for there were not wanting voices which said that when his prodigal munificence had exhausted the treasury, he would follow in the steps of Nero. As it was, however, he lived and died "the darling of the human race," and even won the hearts of the Senate by inflicting condign punishment on the informers whom Vespasian had protected. He built a people's palace—the Thermæ called by his name—on the Esquiline, where he used to bathe in the presence of his subjects, and celebrated the opening of the Flavian amphitheatre by a series of gladiatorial shows, sea-fights, and wild-beast hunts lasting one hundred days. The only calamities which marked his reign were due to the relentless hand of Nature. In A.D. 80 a great fire destroyed the newly-built temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and ravaged the Campus Martius; but a far more dramatic catastrophe was the eruption of Vesuvius (August 23 and 24, A.D. 79), by which Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried, to rise again after eleven centuries as pictures of the civilisation of Imperial Italy.

Titus was succeeded by his brother Domitian, who was all but thirty years of age. Having no male issue, Titus had perforce treated him unofficially as his destined successor; but he had given him no share in the government of the Empire, and it was no secret that the brothers were on the worst of terms. Domitian had taken Domitia, the daughter of Corbulo, from her husband, L. Ælius Lamia Plautius Ælianus, and after living with her for some years had ended by marrying her; and when Titus, for reasons of state, proposed a marriage between his brother and his only daughter, Julia, Domitian first refused the alliance, and then, when his niece had been united to her cousin, Flavius Sabinus, made her his mistress. Titus, with subtle irony, consoled both the husbands whose honour Domitian had outraged with the highest distinctions, but he could never bring himself to act with open hostility towards his brother, and when he died rumour was busy in Rome, some saying that Domitian had hastened, if not actually caused the Emperor's death, others that when Titus with his dying breath said, "I have committed but one error," he meant that he had failed to save Rome from his brother's tyranny by putting him to death. At any rate, Domitian, though unable to refuse the Senate's demand for the deification of Titus, treated his memory, as far as he dared, with scant respect.

The apotheosis of Titus, following that of Vespasian, leads us to consider the importance attached by the Flavians to the worship of the Emperors. In the first place, as the members of

the new dynasty were added to the number of the gods, they acquired a patent of aristocracy which caused their obscure origin to be forgotten and raised them to something like social equality with the Julian house: thus the magistrates of Roman towns in the provinces were required to swear by the divinity of Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, and Titus, and a quasi-legitimate succession was established. Vespasian himself built the Temple of Claudius on a grand scale, and Domitian raised a temple to the "Divi" (*i.e.*, the God-Emperors present and to come) in the Campus Martius, and moreover converted the residence of the Flavii on the Quirinal into a shrine of the Flavian house. For the worship of this family a priestly college (*sodales Flaviales*) was instituted on the model of the *sodales Augustales*, who were in reality priests of the Julian house. The Flavian Emperors, too, made the consecration of their women-folk into a settled practice,[1] and it was clearly their intention, whatever the shortcomings of their earthly pedigree, to scale the highest peaks of Olympian society. These ambitious projects the reign of Domitian brought to untimely disaster.

Domitian has been compared with Tiberius, whom indeed he is reported to have set before himself as a model: but as there is every reason to think that Tacitus, in drawing the portrait of Tiberius, was half-unconsciously borrowing the

[1] Divine honours were bestowed (perhaps by Titus) on Domitilla, the wife of Vespasian, who had died before his elevation to the principate, and by Domitian on his niece Julia.

BAS-RELIEFS FROM THE ARCH OF TITUS.

features of Domitian, it is hard to determine what degree of justice attaches to the comparison. It seems to be true, however, that both took a genuine interest in provincial government and exercised an effective control over their representatives. Suetonius, indeed, tells us—and he is no partisan of Domitian—that he kept so severe a check on the governors of provinces that misrule was practically unknown. He seems likewise to have followed the example of Augustus in endeavouring to promote private morality by legislative and other means. The most striking instance of this was his punishment of the Vestal Virgins who broke their vows of chastity, an offence which, if we may believe Suetonius' gossip, his father and brother had tolerated. It is true that Pliny the Younger represents the last of these *causes célèbres*—the trial and execution of Cornelia, the Mother Superior of the College of Vestals, who was buried alive protesting her innocence to the last—as an act of odious tyranny; but it is far from certain that Pliny is right, for Juvenal (who regards Domitian as a fiend in human shape) speaks in the plainest terms of the misdeeds of a Vestal who must be identified with Cornelia, and neither Nerva nor Trajan felt called upon to revoke the sentence of banishment pronounced upon one of her supposed paramours, whose guilt was doubtful.

In respect of foreign policy the interest of Domitian's reign is centred in the North. The measures taken for the defence of the Rhine and Danube frontiers and the campaigns of Agricola

in Britain are deserving of careful study. It was explained above (p. 121), that Vespasian added to the Empire the district lying between the upper waters of the Rhine and Danube. Domitian took a further step in continuation of this policy by pushing forward the military frontier on the middle Rhine so as to embrace the Wetterau and the Taunus. This district, which lay within sight of the great fortress at Mainz, had already attracted Roman settlers in no inconsiderable numbers. From the time of Augustus the hot springs of Wiesbaden had been visited by invalids, and in the reign of Claudius we hear of an enterprising general prospecting for silver in the Taunus range. Naturally enough, some attempts had been made to furnish military protection to the pioneers of Roman civilisation. Besides the *tête de pont* at Kastel (opposite Mainz) there was a strong fort in the Main valley at Höchst, which can be shown to date from Augustus, and another at Hofheim dating from the time of Gaius or Claudius. Wiesbaden, too, had a small garrison. But the peaceful penetration of this fertile region by Roman culture was threatened by the formidable German tribe of the Chatti, who had once enjoyed possession of the Wetterau, and though long since ousted from the lowlands, had swept down from the hills during the turmoil of A.D. 70 and spent their force in an ineffectual assault upon Mainz. In A.D. 83 Domitian wisely determined to protect the valuable territory on the right bank of the Rhine from further raids, and having gathered an army

of four legions at Mainz, crossed the Rhine and drove the Chatti from their seats in the Taunus. We hear little of these operations from Roman historians, but we know that their success was deemed of sufficient importance to justify a triumph celebrated in the winter of 83–4 A.D. and the addition of *Germanicus* to the Emperor's titles. They have, however, left a more enduring monument in the series of forts and towers which form a well-devised chain of defences for the territory now occupied. Frontinus, in his treatise on the art of war, tells us that Domitian "drew 'frontier-tracks' (*limites*) 120 miles in length," and the distance which he names corresponds with the length of a frontier line running from Kesselstadt on the Main to Rheinbrohl on the Rhine (some 50 miles NW. of Mainz), including the whole of the Wetterau and following the northern slope of the Taunus range. All along this line were built small earthen forts about 278 feet square, and between these were wooden watch-towers. But this chain of posts did not stand alone. In rear of the "*Limes*," as it is conventionally called, were constructed a series of stone forts differing in size—the largest measures 410 yards square—garrisoned by auxiliary regiments, from which roads radiated to the outlying posts and enabled a strong force to be concentrated in the briefest space of time on the point threatened by an invading enemy.

The logical consequence of these measures was the extension of the frontier line southwards from the Main until it reached the limits of the *Agri decumates* annexed by Vespasian. There is good

reason to think that this extension was at least in part carried out by Domitian, for the forts and towns on the line running from Wörth on the Main to Schlossau are precisely similar to those of the Taunus. South of Schlossau, however, we find a chain of large stone forts carrying the frontier defences down to the Black Forest, and the date of these is not so clear.

Strangely enough, the peace of the newly-won lands was broken not (in the first instance) by the barbarian, but by the Roman legionary. In 88–9 A.D. the Fourteenth and Twenty-first Legions, quartered at Mainz, saluted their commander, L. Antonius Saturninus, as Emperor. Saturninus was a man of high lineage—he is said to have been descended from Mark Antony—but dissolute habits, and was probably merely the tool of an aristocratic clique. The moment of revolt was well chosen, for the situation on the Danube was too serious to allow of the removal of the troops quartered in that region; but Domitian met the crisis with striking presence of mind, left Rome within a few days of the arrival of the news at the head of the guard, and summoned the whole of the Spanish army corps to his aid, knowing that Spain was devoted to the Flavian house. Before he reached the Rhine, however, the revolt was at an end. We know the name of the commander (L. Appius Norbanu Maximus) who crushed Saturninus, but, by a singular misfortune, evidence is lacking to show what were the troops under his orders.[1] We are told that

[1] It has been ingeniously argued that they were the legions of Lower Germany.

barbarian allies, doubtless the Chatti, came to the aid of the revolting legions and were only prevented from joining forces with them at the decisive moment of the struggle by the sudden thawing of the ice on which they were about to cross the Rhine. Be that as it may, a clear trace of their inroad has been found in the remains of the frontier forts, several of which can be proved to have been destroyed by fire and almost immediately rebuilt, soon after their original construction. The revolt had one important consequence for the Roman military system. Domitian, fearing to concentrate too much power in the hands of a single commander, abolished the practice of quartering two legions in one camp, so that, *e.g.*, at Mainz, the mutinous corps were replaced by a single legion. Finally Domitian created a *province* of upper Germany, including the Trans-Rhenane lands annexed by Vespasian, in place of the military district which had been ruled by the commander of the upper German army corps; a distinguished lawyer, Javolenus Priscus, became its governor in token that the time of peaceful development was to begin, and the Imperial worship was established at the "Flavian Altars" (*ara Flaviae*), the modern Rottweil.

Thus the security of the Rhenish provinces was assured and their administration reorganised. On the Danube Domitian had a more difficult problem to face, and he cannot be said to have been successful in finding a solution. It was indeed fortunate for Rome that the lands beyond the river were inhabited by races of widely different stock, who very rarely

made common cause against her. On the upper reaches of the Danube the Marcomanni (in Bohemia) and the Quadi (on the river Gran) were the enemies most to be feared. They were of pure Germanic descent, but happily did not unite with their kinsmen on the Rhine. After making its great bend southwards the Danube skirts the plain of Hungary, which was occupied by the Iazyges, a Sarmatian people related to the nomad tribes of Southern Russia, with whom Rome again came in contact at the mouth of the river. But the most formidable of the trans-Danubian nations was that of the Dacians, whose territory comprehended the Banat of Temesvar, the Transylvanian plateau together with the Carpathians, and most of the modern kingdom of Roumania. The Dacians had given trouble to Roman commanders in Thrace since the days of the Republic, and Augustus boasts on the Ancyran monument that his army "crossed the Danube and forced the Dacian tribes to submit to the commands of the Roman people." Under the first dynasty a large transference of population from beyond the Danube into Roman territory had taken place, encouraged by the Imperial government, and Dacian chiefs were counted amongst the allies of Rome. But these friendly relations were now brought to a speedy end. Once before—the date is uncertain—the loose confederation of Dacian tribes had been united under a powerful king, Burebista, but on his death his empire had fallen to pieces. Now a still greater ruler, Decebalus, was making his power felt, and the danger was as yet hardly realised at

Rome when in 85 A.D. the Dacians crossed the Danube, overran the province of Mœsia, and defeated the Roman garrison, killing the governor, Oppius Sabinus. Domitian at once left Rome, taking with him Cornelius Fuscus, prefect of the prætorians, with a portion of the guard. The Dacians were soon driven out of Mœsia, and Domitian returned to Rome, possibly to celebrate a premature triumph, leaving Fuscus to exact a signal vengeance from the invading host. Fuscus determined to penetrate the barrier of the Carpathians and occupy the enemy's capital, Sarmizegetusa (the modern Varhely); but he was attacked in the narrow valley of the Temes and perished with almost the whole of his force. The disaster was the greatest which had befallen the Roman army since the defeat of Varus, and Domitian set about reorganising the defences of the lower Danube before attempting to avenge it. The district of Mœsia was divided into an upper and a lower province, each garrisoned by two legions, and fresh camps were established at Durostorum and Trœsmis (Iglitza), whilst the number of auxiliary regiments in the Danube provinces was considerably increased. At last, in 89 A.D., the blow was struck. An expeditionary force commanded by Tettius Julianus, who had helped to repel the invasion of the Roxolani in A.D. 69 (p. 99), crossed the Danube, skirted the base of the Western Carpathians, and forcing its way up the valley of the Temes with better success than Fuscus, threatened the Dacian capital.

Unfortunately Domitian, burning to achieve the

Photo] [*R. Moscioni.*

DOMITIAN.

(*Vatican.*)

triumph of which the speedy suppression of Saturninus' revolt had baulked him,[1] picked a quarrel with the Marcomanni and Quadi on the ground that they had refused their aid against the Dacians, treacherously slew their envoys, and invaded their territory. He was signally defeated and put to flight, and in his alarm made peace with Decebalus, who gave up the army and prisoners which he had taken and consented to recognise the suzerainty of Rome, sending his brother Diegis to receive the diadem from Domitian, but received in return a considerable subsidy as the price of his alliance, and what was of still greater value in his far-seeing eyes, the services of Roman military engineers and artillerists. This was indeed a humiliating end to a series of well-planned operations, and though Domitian celebrated a double triumph and received extravagant honours from the Senate, which decreed the erection of a colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor in the centre of the Forum,[2] the wiser heads at Rome knew that the day of reckoning had only been deferred, and that the inevitable conflict was likely to prove no light matter; and even Domitian refused the title of *Dacicus*, which was offered to him by the Senate, but is found only at the head of one of Martial's most fulsome dedications. Once again he was called to the banks of the Danube, this time by the news that a coalition of the Marcomanni and Quadi with

[1] He probably marched directly from Upper Germany to Pannonia without revisiting Rome.

[2] Its foundation was recently laid bare by Comm. Boni's excavations in 1904.

the Sarmatian Iazyges had annihilated a Roman legion. Peace was soon restored, but it was a peace without honour, for Domitian did not venture to celebrate a triumph, although adulation had by this time become his daily bread, but contented himself with depositing a laurel wreath in the shrine of Jupiter Capitolinus. It may have been at this time that the army corps of the upper Danube was strengthened by the addition of a legion (*II Adjutrix*) transferred from Britain and quartered at Aquincum (Alt-Ofen).[1]

On the whole, then, Domitian's policy on the Danube frontier gave him small ground for pride. Yet Roman civilisation was gaining a footing on the left bank of the river, and the town of Drobetæ (near Turn Severin) in Dacian territory bore the title of *Municipium Flavium*, which it probably owed to the favour of Domitian.

We have already mentioned the appointment of Agricola by Vespasian to the governorship of Britain (p. 125). He remained at his post for seven years, and undertook a series of campaigns to which full justice—as we may suppose—is done by his biographer Tacitus, a great *littérateur*, a devoted son-in-law, and a bad military historian. It is impossible here to discuss the doubtful details of the story: but the main outlines are as follows: In his first campaign Agricola subdued the [illegible]ces of North Wales and the island of M[illegible]nglesey); the second year was spent in [illegible] the newly-con-

[1] The future Emperor Hadrian served as an officer in this legion during the campaign against the Sarmatians.

quered districts by a chain of forts and roads; it was not until the third summer that the advance northwards, which was evidently his main object, could begin. In this year (A.D. 80) Agricola reached an estuary called by Tacitus the Tanaus, which has been variously identified with the Tyne, the Tweed, the Tay and the Solway (for it is not even clear whether the advance was made by the east coast or the west). At any rate, it is certain that in the following year Agricola reached the estuaries of the Clyde and the Forth and fortified the intervening strip of land. But he was not yet content. In A.D. 82 he sailed across the Clyde and harried the natives of Arran and Cantyre, and even cast longing eyes on Ireland, which—as in later years he was wont to complain to his son-in-law—would have formed an admirable base of operations against Northern Spain for a commander with but one legion and a few auxiliaries under his orders! Unfortunately Domitian, whose advisers may possibly have had a more accurate knowledge of geography than Agricola or Tacitus, declined to furnish the force asked for, and Agricola had perforce to content himself with an advance into land never yet trodden by the feet of the legions, ending in a pitched battle (84 A.D.) in which the Caledonians were defeated with great slaughter, and with the circumnavigation of Scotland [illegible] North Sea fleet. It was perhaps no matter for [illegible] that Domitian regarded Agricola's triumphs [illegible] expensive luxury and recalled him with every ma[illegible] honour (A.D. 85). He became a man with a grievance, and died in retirement some

years later; his friends naturally said that the Emperor was jealous of him, and some even hinted that he had been poisoned. The net result of his campaigns in Britain seems to have been that Eburacum (York) became the chief advanced post of Roman rule in the North; and even this is a matter of conjecture.

The reign of Domitian, then, was a time of great military activity; and the Emperor, who felt that his power rested on the army, sought to secure its loyalty by liberal treatment, increasing the pay of the legionaries by one-third and that of the guards in a like proportion. This no doubt formed a heavy drain on the financial resources of the Empire, and as Domitian was lavish in his expenditure on shows[1] and largesses, as well as a great builder in Rome, and moreover endeavoured to gain popularity by remitting claims against the debtors of the state, he was forced to recoup himself by laying hands on the property of the aristocracy. This policy suited only too well with his jealous and suspicious disposition and his determination to exercise autocratic power, so that the closing years of his rule became a reign of terror, the horrors of which the writings of Pliny and Tacitus enable us in some degree to picture. Perhaps the most significant story is that which Pliny tells us of a visit which he paid to one Corellius Rufus, who was suffering unspeakable agonies from

[1] In 88 A.D. Domitian celebrated the *Ludi Saeculares*, reckoning from the era of Augustus. He instituted the *Ludi Capitolini*, at which musical and literary contests were the principal feature, and attracted the chief *virtuosi* and *littérateurs* of the time. Similar contests were held at the Emperor's villa at Albano.

an incurable complaint. When the friends were alone, Rufus whispered, "Do you know why I continue to endure these torments? It is in the hope that I may survive that villain, if but for one day." He lived to see Nerva Emperor, and then committed suicide in peace.

Domitian lost no opportunity of showing that he was no mere mortal; though he was not officially addressed as divine, he insisted that his agents should write of him as "Our Lord and God," and in externals he assumed a pomp such as had not been seen in any previous Emperor. Yet he went in constant fear of conspiracy and trusted none of his subordinates, constantly changing even his prætorian prefects. He revived the operation of the law of treason, and refused to accede to the request of the Senate that he would lay down the principle that a senator could not be condemned to death except by his peers. Nevertheless, it was not his custom to hold treason trials in his private court, as Claudius, for example, had so often done; but, by a refinement of cruelty, he attended the sessions of the Senate as a High Court of Justice and compelled its members to vote for the death of their friends and colleagues. After the failure of Saturninus' revolt, and especially in the last three years of his reign, the informers laboured without ceasing. A determined attack was made on the Stoic clique. Herennius Senecio was put to death for writing the life of Helvidius Priscus, Junius Rusticus for writing that of Thrasea Pætus. A decree of banishment went forth against all teachers of philosophy, who were coupled with astrologers

and fortune-tellers. The hand of Domitian also lay heavy on the Christians, who had by this time made converts in the highest ranks of society and even in the Imperial household. There is no reason to doubt that Flavius Clemens, a first cousin of the Emperor, and his wife Domitilla, who were found guilty of "atheism," *i.e.*, a refusal to recognise the Imperial worship, made open profession of Christianity, and that amongst the victims of the same persecution was Acilius Glabrio, the representative of one of the oldest families still surviving in Rome. The earliest of the Catacombs was excavated in ground belonging to Domitilla, and the crypt of the Acilii Glabriones may be seen in another.

Domitian was now left without a friend whom he could trust, and with no one in his own family on whom he could lean. The brother of Clemens, Flavius Sabinus (p. 131), he had put to death some years earlier; his niece and mistress, Julia, had died in 89–90 A.D. and received the honour of apotheosis; and he was forced to rest his hopes of dynastic succession on the infant sons of Clemens, whom he renamed Vespasian and Domitian and committed to the care of the rhetorician Quintilian. His wife, Domitia, had repaid his infidelities in kind; but although he had divorced her on account of her intrigue with a popular actor named Paris (whom he caused to be murdered in the street), he afterwards recalled her. Now she no longer felt secure, and lent a ready ear to the proposals of the two prætorian prefects and other conspirators. Three freedmen of the palace were made privy to the plot, and on September 18,

96 A.D., Domitian was stabbed by one of his procurators. The news was received with a shriek of joy by the trembling Senate, which decreed the destruction of his monuments and the erasure of his name from public inscriptions. Only his nurse, Phyllis, mourned him, and contrived to lay his ashes beside those of the divine Julia.

The period of the Flavian Emperors deserves to be remembered not merely as that in which the nominal independence of the Senate was shown to be a transparent fiction, but also as the blossoming-time of the finest flower of Roman art. For a brief space the brilliancy and *bravura* of the Hellenistic craftsman were enlisted in the service of Italian art, with its sure vision and uncompromising faithfulness, and we can still trace the issue of this happy union in such fine decorative compositions as the reliefs from the passage-way of the Arch of Titus and in the superb series of Flavian portrait-busts which rank as triumphs of impressionist sculpture. Tacitus may be right in saying that the insane luxury of the Neronian period went out of fashion under the Flavian dynasty; but the society pictured by Martial seems to us fully as frivolous and immoral as that which went before, and its surroundings, judged by æsthetic standards, must have been even more brilliant.

CHAPTER V

NERVA, TRAJAN, AND HADRIAN

BEFORE compassing the murder of Domitian the conspirators had been careful to make choice of a successor likely to prove acceptable to the Senate and—what was more important—to the guards. They had some difficulty in finding a candidate for the perilous prize of empire; but at length they secured the consent of M. Cocceius Nerva, a man sixty years of age, sprung from a family raised to patrician rank (most probably by Augustus) whose members were chiefly distinguished for their legal knowledge. Nerva was a man of some literary attainments, whom eminent respectability and lack of independence had carried safely through an official career marked by the attainment of the triumphal insignia as a reward for services rendered to Nero in the suppression of the Pisonian conspiracy (p. 81) and by two consulships, in the first of which his colleague was Vespasian and in the second Domitian. It is said that the possession of an "imperial horoscope" brought him into disfavour towards the close of the latter reign, for Domitian

found in astrology an absorbing interest and a deadly weapon, and this may have determined his action. His election to the principate was a matter of course, and the Senate hailed his accession as the restoration of liberty. But the true meaning of political freedom had long been forgotten. It was much indeed that a man might (in the words of Tacitus) "think what he pleased and say what he thought"; but this was very far from the freedom which means self-determination, and the Senate was in fact unfitted for self-rule. Nerva, it is true, permitted it to let loose its pent-up hatred against Domitian in an outburst of impotent fury against his statues, monuments, and inscriptions; he swore an oath that he would put no senator to death, suspended the operation of the law of treason, and recalled the philosophers and political exiles; but he was forced to put a stop to the orgy of revenge, which was professedly directed against the informers but too often served to gratify private grudges, and wiser and cooler heads doubtless agreed with the consul Fronto that "while it was bad enough to have an Emperor under whom no one might do anything, it was worse to have one under whom everyone might do everything."

The brief reign of Nerva cannot be regarded as a return from absolutism towards constitutional government; the bureaucracy was too highly organised and too firmly established to admit of such a change; but it does mark the attainment of a *modus vivendi* between the senatorial order and the principate which made government easier and restored social peace. The acts of the reign likewise testify in some degree

Photo] *[R. Moscioni.*

NERVA.

(*Vatican.*)

to the influence of the new aristocracy. A commission of four senators was appointed to investigate the financial position of the state, and by the co-operation of the Emperor, who sold a large amount of crown property, the treasury was replenished, and it was even found possible to make certain remissions of taxation. It is significant that the most important of these, by which the cost of the Imperial posting service was transferred to the *fiscus*, was confined to Italy; for Italy was the special care of the new government. An agrarian law was passed in due form by the popular assembly [1] providing for the purchase of lands to be distributed amongst agricultural colonists, and a senatorial commission of four members was appointed to carry the law into effect. To Nerva was also due the inception of a scheme which was to promote in no small degree the welfare of Italy. It had long been the custom for public-spirited individuals to provide endowments for the maintenance of poor children in their native towns. We find an example of such munificence at Atina as early as the time of Augustus; and the younger Pliny tells us that he made a benefaction of half a million sesterces (about £5,000) to the town of Comum for a like purpose. In this case the payment of interest at 6 per cent. on the capital sum was amply secured, for Pliny mortgaged an estate of far greater value than the principal to the municipality and rendered himself liable for the necessary rent-charge. Nerva determined to establish a system of state-endowed

[1] This was apparently the last occasion on which the ancient form of legislation was employed.

charity on a large scale which should indirectly benefit Italian agriculture. This much is proved by the coins which show the Emperor seated on a curule chair and extending his hand to a female figure personifying Italy and accompanied by a boy and girl, with the legend *Tutela Italiae* ("the guardianship of Italy"), but it is probable that the scheme was not in full working order before 101 A.D., when Trajan was on the throne. Considerable sums of money were lent at low interest [1] to small landowners on the security of their estates, and the revenues derived from these mortgages served to maintain the children (both male and female) of poor parents. Two Imperial commissioners, C. Cornelius Gallicanus and T. Pomponius Bassus, both of senatorial rank but holding no special title, were appointed to carry out the necessary preliminaries, and it was not for some time, possibly not before the reign of Hadrian, that permanent "prefects of the *alimenta*," as the institution was called, came into being. Besides these high officials, the several townships which benefited by the endowments employed a staff of minor officers to deal with their distribution; we know the names of about forty communities which participated in these foundations, and possess inscriptions giving the particulars of the endowment in two cases.

But though Nerva was a beneficent ruler, he was not a strong one. He not only shielded the informers who had acted as Domitian's bloodhounds from the vengeance of the Senate, but retained some

[1] In one instance 5 per cent. is named, in another only 2½ per cent.

of them, such as the notorious Veiento, amongst the intimates of his court, and he was ultimately forced to yield to the demands of the guard, headed by Casperius Ælianus, one of Domitian's former prefects, for the execution of the tyrannicides, including Petronius Secundus himself. Nerva, feeling that age and weakness prevented him from fulfilling a task which he had undertaken with reluctance, then resolved to associate with himself a consort who should be his destined successor. His choice fell on M. Ulpius Trajanus, an eminent soldier and the son of a Spaniard of Italica (near Seville). The father had served with distinction in the Jewish war and had been rewarded by Vespasian with the consulship and the patriciate. His son, who was now forty-four years of age, had spent his life in military service, and had won the favour of Domitian and the "ordinary consulship" for A.D. 91 by the promptitude with which he led the legion which he was commanding in Spain against Saturninus (p. 137). Nerva, it seems, had placed him in command of the army in Upper Germany, and in October, A.D. 97, solemnly adopted him as his son before the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Thus Trajan acquired the name of Cæsar, and shortly afterwards (on October 27th) the tribunician power and proconsular *imperium*[1] were conferred upon him. He did not, however, leave the Rhine, where there was work to be done; indeed, the title *Germanicus* was bestowed both on Nerva and on his adopted son at the close of the year in honour of

[1] This latter was perhaps restricted to the Rhine frontier.

Photo] *[R. Moscioni.*

BAS-RELIEF IN THE ROMAN FORUM.

On the left, Trajan on the Rostra; on the right, statue of Nerva facing Italia with a child in her arms: the allusion is to the *alimenta*

some success gained by the Roman army on the upper Danube. He was at Cologne when the news reached him that Nerva had died on January 25, A.D. 98.

Trajan was, as has been said, a native of Spain, but it would be a mistake to suppose that his elevation to the principate was felt to imply the rule of a provincial over Romans, for Italica was a town whose inhabitants had enjoyed the privilege of Roman citizenship since the close of the Hannibalic war. He was, however, before all things a soldier, who knew little of the life of the capital or the prejudices of its society, and though he was no tyrant, he governed without regard to constitutional niceties, and assumed, for example, the right to create fresh patrician families without holding the censorship or causing an enabling act to be passed. He was also somewhat susceptible to flattery, and readily accepted honorary titles for himself and his family. Thus he permitted himself to be officially styled "Optimus"—the best of rulers—and allowed not merely his wife, but also his sister and niece, to bear the title Augusta, contrary to all precedent. All three, moreover, were raised to the rank of divinities on their death. Above all, though he showed strong common sense in dealing with questions of detail, he seems to have been infected with the disease of megalomania by the tenure of absolute power. A symptom of this may be seen in the fact that he caused the saddle connecting the Capitoline and Quirinal hills to be cut away to the depth of one hundred feet[1] in order to

[1] This is the *prima facie* meaning of the inscription on the base of Trajan's column: but recent excavations have cast doubt upon its interpretation.

build a Forum surpassing in size and magnificence those of his predecessors and ranking as the finest monument of Roman architecture. But the passion for superlative achievements led him further afield, not merely to the conquest of a new territory beyond the Danube, which it was possible to justify on political grounds, but to the expedition to the further East which almost clouded the last years of his reign with tragedy. Were it not for this strain of Imperial madness, we might pronounce Trajan one of the greatest of the Emperors.

A year passed before the new Emperor entered Rome. In the meantime he busied himself with strengthening the chain of frontier defence based on the Rhine and Danube.[1] It may have been at this time that the military road through the Black Forest was carried over to the Danube; it is certain that the highway which followed the right bank of that river was the work of this and the two following years, and very probable that the new camp fortress of Brigetio (O-Szöny, opposite Komorn) was established at this time. Trajan had already determined to assert Roman supremacy on the Danube more effectively than Domitian had done, and to settle accounts with the Dacian kingdom once for all; but in the meantime it was necessary for him to visit Rome and order the affairs of the central government. He was welcomed with enthusiasm, won the

[1] It was probably now that Trajan founded or granted Roman rights to the towns in the Rhine district which bear his name amongst their titles—Xanten, Speier, and a settlement of Suevi on the Neckar, all surnamed *Ulpia*.

hearts of the Senate by renewing the oath exacted from Nerva that he would not condemn one of its members to death and by punishing the principal informers, and made it plain to the guards that he did not intend to rule by their means, reducing the usual donative by one-half. The satisfaction which his wise and equable rule called forth is expressed in the panegyric delivered by the younger Pliny as an address of thanks to the Emperor in September, A.D. 100, which is doubtless genuine in sentiment, though at times fulsome in expression. The opening years of the reign were marked by two *causes célèbres* arising out of the misgovernment of the provinces of Africa and Bætica (Southern Spain) by senatorial proconsuls. One of the defendants, Marius Priscus, whose prosecutors were Pliny and Tacitus, suffered conviction; the other, Classicus, escaped it only by death.

In A.D. 101 the long-expected Dacian war broke out. The precise occasion of quarrel is not recorded, but there can be no doubt that Decebalus foresaw the imminent struggle and sought to secure himself by every means in his power, entering into communication even with the Parthian king. The history of the Dacian wars of Trajan is difficult to trace, for literary evidence is sadly to seek. Our only continuous history is that of Cassius Dio, written in the third century A.D. and preserved in late abridgments. Only a single fragment remains of Trajan's own narrative of his campaigns, and that we owe to the casual citation of a writer on grammar. We possess, however, a splendid epic in stone, by means

of which the Dacian campaigns live again before our eyes, in the reliefs which adorn the spiral column, one hundred feet high, still standing amidst the broken shafts of Trajan's basilica. Vividly, however, as they depict the moments of the strife, they stand sorely in need of an authoritative interpretation which shall elicit from them a connected and intelligible narrative. The account which follows cannot, therefore, claim to be more than an essay towards such an interpretation.

On March 25, A.D. 101, Trajan left Rome, taking with him part at least of the prætorian guard, joined the legionary force which had been concentrated on the middle Danube near Viminacium (Kostolatz, in Servia), and crossing the stream by a double bridge of boats, closely skirted the westernmost edge of the Carpathians until he reached the valley of the Temes, which gives access to the Transylvanian plateau. Following this river and its tributary the Bisztra, he found himself at length confronted by the army of Decebalus, but although he was successful in the field of battle, his advance was barred by the impregnable defences of the Iron Gate pass when almost within sight of Decebalus' capital, Sarmizegetusa. The campaigning season was now at an end, and Trajan was forced to recognise that he had underrated the strength of Decebalus' positions and to withdraw his army, leaving, as we may suppose, a containing force in the valley of the Temes. He was soon to learn that the Dacians were capable of offence as well as of defence. In the course of the following winter they crossed the lower Danube,

reinforced by the redoubtable horsemen of the Roxolani, who, together with their mounts, were clad in coats of mail, and raided the province of Mœsia. The Roman posts were hard pressed, and Trajan was forced to hasten in person to their relief. He was conveyed on shipboard to one of the camps below the Iron Gates, and there disembarked a field force, largely consisting of auxiliary cavalry, by means of which he gained a decisive victory over the raiders at Nicopolis (Nicup, in Bulgaria). In the spring of 102 A.D. a second advance was made, but this time Trajan wisely determined to employ a number of columns marching by different routes. One of these, it may be surmised, crossed the Southern Carpathians by the Vulkan and Szurduk passes and thus turned Decebalus' position. The irregular Moorish cavalry under their native leader, Lusius Quietus, likewise did good service, and Decebalus was at length forced to make peace on Trajan's terms, which were by no means harsh. Decebalus acknowledged the suzerainty of Rome, but lost no territory save that which he had filched from his neighbours, probably the Iazyges, in the plain of Hungary. What was more important, however, he surrendered the park of artillery which he had formed on the Roman model and the Roman artificers who had designed the engines, and he agreed for the future not to recruit his army from Roman territory. Trajan hoped that by enforcing these conditions he would prevent Decebalus from reconstituting his power, and as a further guarantee Roman troops continued to occupy Sarmizegetusa and other posts.

At the close of A.D. 102 Trajan celebrated a triumph and assumed the title of *Dacicus*.

But Decebalus was resolved not to submit to Rome without one last struggle for freedom. In defiance of the treaty, he restored his fortifications, recreated his armaments, and endeavoured to draw into alliance all the peoples who dreaded the inexorable advance of Rome. After two years of plotting and preparation he took the offensive, and in A.D. 105 the Dacian hosts poured across the Danube and threatened the security of the Roman dominions. In the early summer Trajan left Rome for the seat of war. The skilful artist who designed the reliefs of the column recounts his journey from port to port, setting out by night from Ancona and arriving ultimately at Lissus, whence a military highway, constructed by Augustus' order, led north-eastwards to the Danube. We see the Emperor pressing forward by forced marches, receiving the homage both of Roman citizens and of friendly Dacians—doubtless settlers transplanted from the north bank of the Danube—at a site set apart for the Imperial worship, and finally, as the climax of a thrilling narrative, appearing in the nick of time to relieve the hard-pressed garrison. Then the march of events comes to rest and we are shown the stone bridge over the Danube whose piers may yet be traced at Turn Severin, below the Iron Gates. Here the envoys of German and Sarmatian tribes from far and near come to offer homage and assistance; and hence in the following year (A.D. 106) the final advance begins. In telling the story of this campaign the artist clearly indicates the convergent

march of independent columns, which close in upon the Dacian capital, now converted into a fortress of no mean strength. But the progress of the Roman siege works, aided by treachery within the walls, brings about the inevitable catastrophe. Part of the defenders are seen to set fire to the city, part are gathered about a poisoned bowl and solemnly partake, one by one, of the deadly cup, while others make good their escape into the mountain fastnesses of Northern Dacia. Then follows a war of episodes, in which the enemy are hunted from river to river and from forest to forest, and at length we see Decebalus, brought to bay by the Roman horsemen, plunging his sword into his throat. His head and hand uplifted on a shield are displayed before the assembled troops, and the story ends with the flight of the last remnants of his people beyond the confines of Dacia.

Here, if anywhere, it might be said with truth that Rome had "made a solitude and called it peace." Trajan therefore lost no time in repeopling the Transylvanian plateau with settlers drawn from all provinces of the Empire, but more especially from the East, whence came Syrians, Palmyrenes, and Commagenians, bringing their gods with them and contributing in no small degree to the diffusion of Oriental religion in the West. From Dalmatia, too, came a tribe of miners, the Pirustæ, whose services were needed to exploit the mineral wealth of the new province; for it cannot be doubted that the gold mines of Alburnum (Verespatak) had aroused the cupidity of the Roman and furnished a powerful

[Reproduced, by permission of Professor Cichorius, from "Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule."

THE SUICIDE OF DECEBALUS.

(From Trajan's Column.)

motive for Trajan's conquest. Sarmizegetusa became a Roman colony and remained the capital of Dacia, and the province was surrounded by a ring of forts and custom-houses extending on the East to the line of the river Aluta (Alt) and thus embracing the plain of Lesser Wallachia.

The defence and development of the Danube region was an object of extreme solicitude to Trajan, who recognised that the centre of gravity of his Empire lay here. Behind the bastion formed by Dacia civil settlements took the place of military stations—Tsierna (Orsova) on the left bank of the Danube, Pontes (at the head of the new stone bridge), Ratiaria and Œscus became colonies—while to east and west a fringe of territory north of the river was annexed and protected by ramparts of earth or stone running from Danube to Theiss and from Pruth to Dniestr. A double rampart, moreover, crossed the Dobrudsha some miles from the mouth of the Danube and formed an effectual barrier against the inroads of the restless barbarians who roamed the Scythian plains. In the same district we find a mysterious monument which bore the name of "Trajan's trophy" rising beside an altar which is also the tomb of three thousand Roman soldiers. Clearly we have here the scene of a great defeat and a greater victory; yet history records neither, and it has even been thought that the trophy originally commemorated a success gained in the earliest days of Augustus' reign.

While Trajan was making Dacia a part of the Roman dominions, a fresh province was added there-

to to the east. On the death of Herod Agrippa II. in A.D. 100, Northern Palestine was incorporated with Syria, and some five years later died the last of the sheikhs who ruled as vassals of Rome over the Nabatæan Arabs. The *legatus* of Syria, Cornelius Palma, therefore received orders to annex their territory and, as there was some show of resistance, gained the honours of a conqueror. The most important city of the Nabatæans, Damascus, together with the adjoining districts, was annexed to Syria; the remaining territory became a substantive province whose capital was fixed at Bostra (Bozrah). Here Græco-Roman civilisation flourished exceedingly; mushroom cities sprang up everywhere, and a fresh type of art and architecture was created, which, when taken up into the service of Christianity, had a far-reaching influence.

On the African frontier, too, Trajan took a step in advance. Since Augustus' time the headquarters of the Third Legion had been fixed at Theveste (Tebessa); it was now moved westward to Lambæsis (Lambèse), while the block of mountains to the south—the Aures—was encircled with frontier posts and skirted by military roads at its eastern and western ends. New towns were built in the province thus permanently secured against the *razzias* of the Berbers; one of these—Thamugadi, the modern Timgad—stands at this day amidst the surrounding solitudes as a splendid monument of what Rome created in her strength and lost in her weakness.

For some years after the conquest of Dacia, which was celebrated by a triumph and shows of surpassing

magnificence, in which ten thousand gladiators fought in the arena, the Roman peace was practically unbroken, and Trajan was free to devote himself to administrative tasks. He followed Nerva in his zealous care for the welfare of Italy. As was explained above, the scheme of charitable endowments initiated by Nerva had been carried into effect in the early years of his reign; and an inscription relating thereto tells us that Trajan "had regard to the eternity of Italy." In the same spirit were conceived other measures, such as the prohibition of emigration from Italy to newly founded colonies, and the renewal of an ordinance of Tiberius requiring senators to invest one-third of their capital in Italian land. The material welfare of Italy was promoted by the building of fresh roads—notably the Via Trajana from Beneventum [1] to Brundisium—and the restoration of old ones, as also by the harbour works carried out by the Emperor's orders. Not only was the harbour of Ostia enlarged by the addition of an inner basin, hexagonal in shape, but a new port was created at Centumcellæ, which under the name of Civitá Vecchia has far out-distanced its older rival. On the east coast, too, the harbour of Ancona was transformed and enlarged, making the city one of the most important on the Adriatic; here a triumphal arch still stands to commemorate Trajan's benefaction. While Italy thus received a full measure of the Imperial favour, the provinces were not neglected, and amongst the extant monu-

[1] Here a fine triumphal arch, whose reliefs form an epitome of Trajan's acts, spans the *Via Trajana* (see Pl. XX).

Photo] *[R. Moscioni.*

THE ARCH OF TRAJAN AT BENEVENTUM.

ments of Roman industry not the least imposing is the magnificent bridge which spans the Tagus at Alcantara.

But while the government of Trajan was undoubtedly benevolent, it was also despotic. It has been the custom to extol the age of Trajan and his successors as one of the happiest in the history of civilised man; but if we look beneath the surface we shall find that the material blessings which the Roman world then enjoyed were purchased at too heavy a price, to wit, that slow and sure decay of public spirit which follows the loss of political freedom. The evidence at our command does not enable us to trace in detail the stages by which the centralised bureaucracy at Rome gathered into its hands the threads of administration, while the organs of self-government in the communities, Roman or non-Roman, of which the Empire was the sum suffered a gradual atrophy. The municipal charters granted by the Flavian Emperors make provision for the case in which candidates for local office should fail to present themselves willingly—a sure sign that the process by which such posts were transformed from an honour into a burden had already begun. It is, furthermore, possible that the same Emperors instituted the practice of despatching special commissioners to supervise local administration, particularly in the matter of finance. But the evidence for this is doubtful, while inscriptions relating to the work of such Imperial commissioners (*curatores*) are found in large numbers from the time of Trajan onwards, so that we must at least assume that a great extension

of the system dates from his reign. There could be no more manifest token that the constitutional fictions by which the monarchy of Augustus was veiled had ceased to possess the slightest significance than the treatment thus meted out to all towns alike —whether it were the citizen communities of Italy and the provinces, the "free cities" enjoying a nominal independence, or the subject towns in senatorial as well as Imperial territory. The office of an Imperial commissioner, too, was no regular magistracy; it did not even form a grade in the official hierarchy, which was by now firmly organised, but was conferred on members both of the senatorial and equestrian orders, sometimes even on men of plebeian rank. Primarily the function of such a commissioner was to set the local finances in order, and in the Greek East he actually bore the title of "auditor" (λογιστής); but as this involved the administration of the whole property of the community, its lands, buildings, and revenues, there were few questions touching the government of the town in which he did not acquire the deciding voice.

Trajan was likewise responsible for a still more radical innovation of the same kind. We find him empowering extraordinary commissioners of senatorial rank to "set in order the affairs" of a whole senatorial province, or of the free cities included in such a province, where special circumstances seemed to him to call for such measures. Such a *corrector* (to use the title which in later times became attached to the office) was Sex. Quintilius Valerius Maximus, to whom his friend Pliny addressed a

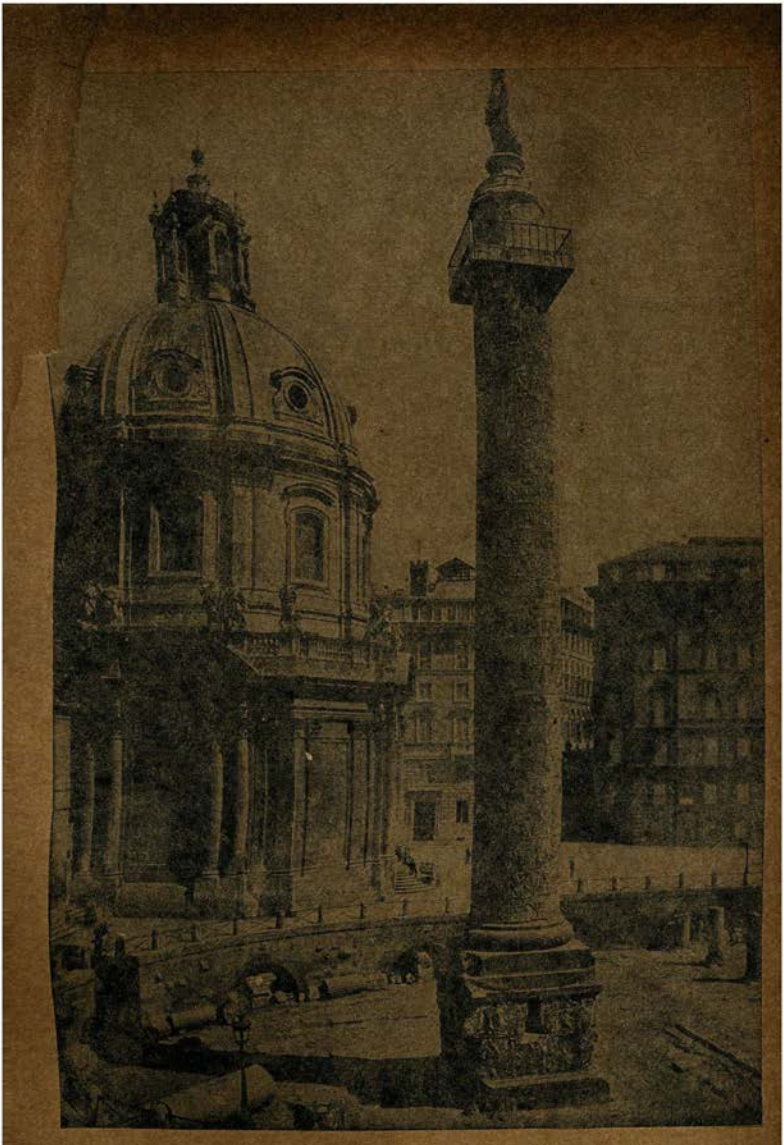
valedictory epistle on his departure for Greece about 108 A.D., reminding him in terms which Cicero had used before him of the debt which Rome owed to Greek culture. A few years later Pliny was himself called to remedy the evils brought upon Bithynia by the misrule of senatorial governors, and, it must be added, by the extravagance and turbulence of the self-governing communities. Happily for us, Pliny interpreted the Imperial mandate in the sense that every step required the sanction of Trajan; and we possess a volume of correspondence which passed between the Emperor and his deputy, which throws a flood of light upon the methods of paternal government, although we should be guilty of a gross error if we supposed that such conditions prevailed in all the provinces of the Empire. The letters leave no doubt either as to Trajan's goodwill towards his subjects or as to his strong common sense, which brushed away all technical obstacles to reform. One case deserves mention as illustrating the conditions of life under an absolute ruler. A citizen of Prusa was accused of treason because he had set up a statue of Trajan in a building where the bodies of his wife and daughter were interred. Pliny thought it necessary to refer the case to Trajan, who gently rebuked his deputy for his hesitation, knowing as he did the Emperor's fixed resolve not to govern by fear. The story shows us not only what Trajan was, but what other Emperors were not. More famous is the case of the Christians, who had now ceased to enjoy the toleration to which, as a Jewish sect, they had been entitled. The severity of Domitian (which

extended to cases of proselytism on the part of Jews) had been exchanged on the accession of Nerva for that illogical policy, employed by so many governments in their dealings with religious recusants, which maintains penal laws but mitigates their application; and to this principle Trajan held fast, directing Pliny to enforce the law when called upon to do so, but to discourage the laying of informations.

In Rome the years of peace were chiefly marked by the great building enterprises in which Trajan furnished a field for the talents of the architect Apollodorus of Damascus, already famous as the designer of the bridge over the Danube. Thermæ were built adjoining those of Titus on the Esquiline, where the golden house of Nero had once stood; but their magnificence was far surpassed by that of the Forum, with its basilica, libraries, and column, to which allusion has already been made. The column was completed in A.D. 113, and towards the close of the same year the call to arms once more came to Trajan. He left Rome for the East, this time to return no more.

The *modus vivendi* established by Nero with the Parthian monarchy had broken down. It will be remembered that by the terms of the agreement Armenia, though a vassal state under Roman sovereignty, became an appanage of the Parthian crown. The prince invested by Trajan with the principality, Axidares, was deposed by his uncle Chosroes, who placed his own son, Parthamasiris, on the throne. This was treated by Trajan as a *casus*

belli, and he at once set sail for the East, arriving in Antioch January 7, A.D. 114. Parthamasiris had expressed his readiness to seek investiture at the Emperor's hands, but Trajan would have none of this; he insisted that the treaty had been broken, and mobilised the army of the Euphrates, seven legions strong, supplemented by native corps and reinforced by seasoned troops from the Danube, on whom Trajan placed more reliance than on the luxurious and ill-disciplined regiments quartered in the Syrian barracks. It is hard to form a judgment on the merits of the case between Rome and Parthia. Apart from the immediate pretext, Trajan had good evidence that correspondence had passed between Decebalus and Pacorus, the predecessor of Chosroes; and he had made up his mind, rightly or wrongly, that the compromise accepted by Nero was unsatisfactory, and must give place to the annexation of Armenia, which (as he rightly perceived) involved, for strategic reasons, that of Mesopotamia also. The immediate objective was Armenia; and Trajan accordingly marched northwards up the valley of the Euphrates. We are told that he occupied Samosata without fighting; but as this was the headquarters of the Sixteenth Legion, and we hear nothing of its loss (which would have been a serious disaster), the statement may be incorrect. There is, however, reason to think that the Parthians had taken the offensive and gained some initial successes. Now, however, Trajan's work was unhindered; at Satala (p. 119) he held a durbar at which the client-kings of Albania and Iberia, in the Caucasus, did



THE COLUMN OF TRAJAN.

homage, and then crossed into Armenia. At Elegeia he was met by Parthamasiris, who made offers of submission, but was dismissed and shortly afterward put to death, whether by Trajan's orders or not is uncertain. Armenia was speedily reduced and became a Roman province, while Trajan returned to winter at Antioch. The campaign of 115 A.D. was directed towards the acquisition of Northern Mesopotamia, and was entirely successful. Trajan crossed the Euphrates, confirmed the vassal prince Abgar of Edessa in his allegiance, and pushed on to Nisibis on the Tigris, while Lusius Quietus with his Moorish cavalry (p. 160) overran the plains and enabled Trajan to add Mesopotamia to the list of Roman provinces. But he was not yet content. After spending a second winter at Antioch, marked by a terrible earthquake (December 13, 115 A.D.) in which he almost lost his life, Trajan set out in A.D. 116 with the intention of striking a blow at the heart of the Parthian kingdom. He first crossed the upper Tigris and converted the district whose centre had once been Niniveh into the province of Assyria, and then, returning to the Euphrates, where a flotilla had been assembled, marched southward to Babylon, which fell into his hands without resistance. Seleucia was likewise taken, and Trajan thence transferred his fleet by means of the royal canal to the Tigris and at length captured Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital, whence Chosroes escaped, leaving his golden throne as part of the spoil. With fifty ships Trajan sailed to the mouth of the Tigris, where he is said to have exclaimed, in envy of Alexander's conquests, "Had

I been young, I would have sailed to India." His pride was soon humbled. From Mesopotamia came the news of a wide-spread insurrection, whose centres were the cities of Edessa, Nisibis, and Seleucia. A legion was cut to pieces with its commander, Maximus, and it needed all the generalship of Lusius Quietus to recover the ground which Rome had lost. Trajan retraced his steps, striking a final note of defiance by placing the crown of Parthia on the head of Parthamaspates, the son of Chosroes. But though he accepted the title *Parthicus*, he was well aware that the conquest of Parthia was still to be achieved. In A.D. 117 Chosroes returned to his capital, and Roman supremacy suffered instant eclipse. At the same moment a concerted rising of the Jews desolated Mesopotamia, Cyprus, Egypt, and Cyrene. Where they were successful, the Jews exacted a terrible vengeance for the destruction of Jerusalem, slaying 240,000 of their enemies in Cyprus and 220,000 in Cyrene. In Alexandria, however, the Greeks gained the upper hand, and the Jews were massacred. But the fabric of the Empire seemed to be shaken, and revolts broke out in Africa and Britain, while the Sarmatians took up arms on the Danube. It was high time for Trajan to return from the desert whither the mirage of Oriental conquest had drawn him, and he set out for Rome. But at Selinus, in Cilicia, he fell ill, and died on August 8, A.D. 117. The Parthian triumph which he had hardly earned was celebrated after his death, and his statue was placed in the triumphal car. As *Divus Trajanus Parthicus* the Romans worshipped him:

but Chosroes still reigned at Ctesiphon, and the three provinces which Trajan had added to the Empire were surrendered by his successor.

Trajan had made no definite provision for the event of his death by appointing a co-regent; but there was small doubt that his choice had fallen upon his ward and cousin, P. Ælius Hadrianus, like himself a native of Italica, who had won the favour of the Empress Plotina, and by her influence had attained the significant distinction of marriage with Trajan's great-niece and sole representative, Vibia Sabina. Hadrian had a distinguished record of military service; he had taken part in both the Dacian wars, and commanded a legion in the second; but the honours conferred upon him were not greater than those enjoyed by many another follower of the senatorial career. In A.D. 117 he was in command of the army of Syria, and had been designated for a second consulship in the following year. On August 9th he received the news of Trajan's death, and two days later that of his own adoption by the dying Emperor, which malicious tongues asserted to be a fiction of Plotina. By this means, and by the favour of the legions, to whom a double donative was promised, Hadrian's peaceful accession was secured; and he gained the ready recognition of the Senate by a modest and respectful letter, in which he asseverated his resolve to put no senator to death.

It was well, indeed, that the Empire was thus freed from the danger of civil strife; for its military

Photo] [R. Moscioni.

HADRIAN.

(*Vatican.*)

resources were severely taxed by the revolts of which mention was made above. Hadrian lost no time in dealing with the crisis. He showed the courage of his convictions by breaking once for all with Trajan's Oriental policy, withdrawing the Roman garrisons from the newly-won provinces, providing an honourable retreat for Parthamaspates, and contenting himself with restoring the *status quo ante* in Armenia. His most trusted officer, Q. Marcius Turbo, was deputed to stamp out the embers of the Jewish revolt, while Lusius Quietus, whose loyalty was not above suspicion, was deprived of his command; his troops were sent back to Mauretania, where the Moorish rebellion became so serious as to call for the presence of Turbo. The rising in Northern Britain which brought about the destruction of the Ninth Legion (quartered at York) was also quelled without the need of Hadrian's personal intervention; but he was obliged to take the field against the Sarmatians on the Danube frontier, and before his task was completed was summoned to Rome by the news that a conspiracy had been formed against him by four consulars, including Lusius Quietus and Palma, the conqueror of Arabia, who was doubtless dissatisfied with his change of policy in the East. The Senate took matters into its own hands and decreed the execution of the four chief conspirators; but Hadrian felt that he had incurred odium by the Senate's act, and renewed the oath that he would never sentence a senator to death. His throne was now secure.

The character of Hadrian was in the highest

degree complex, and thus presents to the student a series of apparently unreconciled contrasts which have proved too hard for many modern historians to resolve. A thorough soldier, yet the inaugurator of a peace policy; a "Greekling," as his Roman subjects called him, saturated with Hellenic ideas and giving to Greeks a place hitherto denied them in the government of the Empire, yet a lover of Roman antiquity; a poet and artist, but with a passion for the details of business and finance; a voluptuary, determined to drain the cup of human experience to the last drop, and at the same time a ruler who laboured strenuously for the well-being of his subjects—such were a few of the diverse parts which Hadrian played. And yet the problem is not so insoluble as it seems; for when we have made due allowance for the subtle element of individuality which scorns analysis, we shall find that Hadrian summed up the tendencies of his time, and that, knowing this, he consciously endeavoured to give them the means of due expression. In other words, he realised that a new nationality had formed itself under the government of the Emperors, and that in order for it to attain its full development there was needed a new type of state. His own part he expressed by the saying "that the ruler exists for the state, not the state for the ruler," and by this principle his acts as a ruler were guided. As to his own personality, the truth seems most nearly expressed by the phrase of Tertullian, who calls him *curiositatum omnium explorator*, "a searcher out of all strange things."

It was no doubt in part this restless curiosity which led Hadrian to spend so large a portion of his reign in travel. There was scarcely a province of his Empire which he failed to visit during his long absences from Rome, the first of which lasted from 121 A.D. to the autumn of 126 A.D., and the second from the summer of 128 A.D. until 132 A.D. In the interval between these two journeys he found time to pay a visit to the province of Africa, where he inspected the Third Legion and the auxiliaries brigaded with it in the new camp at Lambæsis and delivered a series of harangues to the troops, of which some fragments are preserved. Since Hadrian's motives for travel were in part those of an artistic connoisseur, Athens possessed a special attraction for him. It was reserved for him to dedicate the great temple of Olympian Zeus which Pisistratus had begun nearly seven hundred years earlier, and to add a new quarter to the city, besides adorning it with magnificent buildings. Indeed, wherever Hadrian set foot, baths, temples, libraries, and porticoes sprang up as if by magic; for he had a passion for building, and was himself an architect of considerable ingenuity, although his technical proficiency was not coupled with impeccable taste. The chief monument of his skill was the great double temple of Venus and Rome, to make room for which, as is believed, the Arch of Titus was removed to its present position. On a colossal platform surrounded by porticoes stood the twin *cellae*, placed back to back, in which the two divinities were worshipped. Doubtless, too, the Emperor was largely responsible

for the design of the famous villa beneath the slopes of Tibur, which became his plaything in later years, once an incongruous pile of palaces, baths, libraries, and fantastic buildings, which served to recall to him the scenes he had visited in the East, now a wilderness of ruins where violets run riot in early spring.[1]

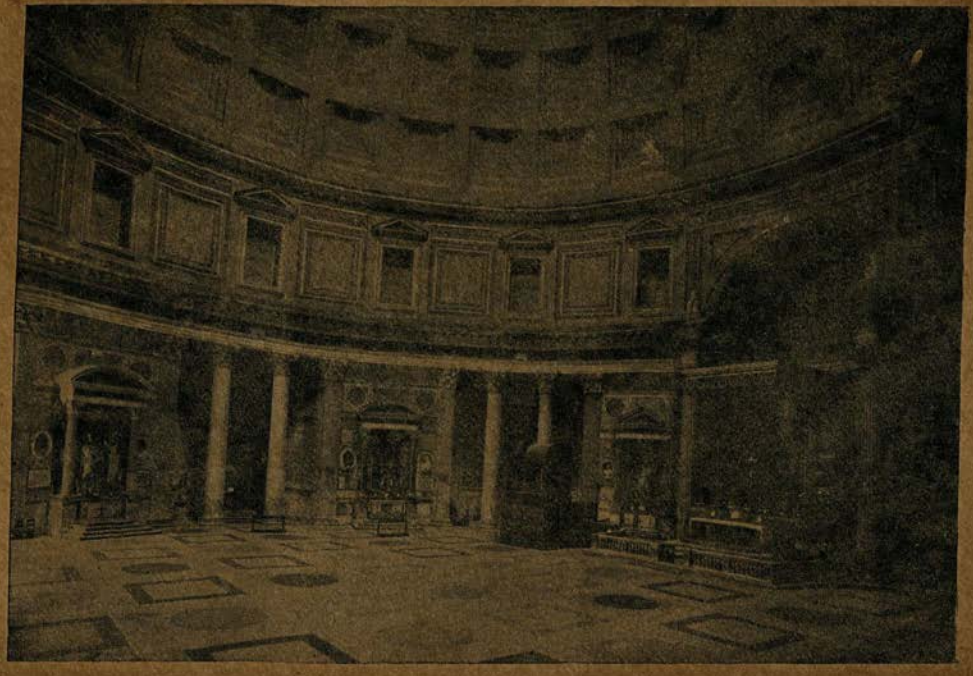
But if Hadrian gratified to the full his architectural fantasies and succeeded in creating a short-lived renaissance of Greek art, whose academic eclecticism fails to excite our enthusiasm, he also found time to effect a great transformation in the government of the Empire. In the first place, he entered upon his reign with the firm conviction that the due limits of Rome's conquering advance had been reached and even overstepped. Besides giving up the Eastern conquests of Trajan, he contemplated—if the report is true—the abandonment of Dacia; but this design was not carried out, and it was decided to maintain the existing frontiers in the Rhine and Danube districts and to encircle them with a strongly-marked chain of defences. The line traced by the Flavian Emperors from the Rhine to the Danube was rendered impassable by a palisade nine feet high formed of great stakes planted in a ditch. Its defences consisted in a chain of stone forts, each designed to contain a cohort of auxiliaries, while the base forts in which the troops had been concentrated under the Flavian *régime* were dismantled. The new frontier line ran straight from

[1] Recent researches have shown that the Pantheon in its present shape (Pl. XXIII.) dates from Hadrian's reign.

point to point where possible, so as to afford direct communication between the forts. We must admit that the dispersion of the garrisons thus entailed weakened the defence of the frontier in a military sense, and that the palisade, however useful as a customs-barrier, could have afforded no adequate protection against barbarian inroads; but Hadrian clearly looked forward to a time of undisturbed peace in which mobile defences would not be needed. The like policy is traceable in the building of the great wall which runs for eighty miles across Northern Britain from Tyne to Solway, expressly attributed to Hadrian by his biographers, and doubtless consequent on the disaster which befel the Ninth Legion (p. 178). What we here find is a solid wall of stone striding with undeviating course over hill and dale and protected by seventeen cohort-camps, between which are smaller forts at intervals of one thousand paces; but it is almost certain that this is the work of a later period, and that Hadrian's wall was of less solid construction.[1] In this case, moreover, the *limes* did not mark the limit of Roman occupation, since fortified positions, such as Bremenium (High Rochester), were held at some distance to the north of it.

Having thus drawn with a firm hand the lines of the frontier, Hadrian devoted himself to reorganising

[1] Remains of a *turf* rampart, which is very probably the work of Hadrian, exist near Birdoswald. It should be added that the relation of the wall to the *Vallum*, or fosse bordered by mounds which runs parallel to it, about 120 yards to the south, is difficult to determine.



THE PANTHEON OF HADRIAN.

the army which was to defend them. Our ancient authorities tell us that the regulations of the service, as laid down by Hadrian, remained in force with little change until the time of Constantine; but we are unhappily in want of evidence to show precisely upon what grounds his claim to be regarded as a military reformer rested. We know, however, that tactics, and particularly cavalry tactics, were a subject of special interest to him. We possess certain treatises on military subjects dedicated to the Emperor by Flavius Arrianus, a Bithynian Greek with some pretensions to literary distinction, whose career is significant of the changed conditions of the time. Arrian, no doubt, owed his success in climbing the ladder of the Imperial service to the personal favour of Hadrian; but it is none the less a token of the Emperor's cosmopolitanism that he should have placed a Greek in command of the important frontier province of Cappadocia. Arrian's account of the military situation in the Black Sea territories is of great value as illustrating Hadrian's policy of enlisting special corps of Orientals, equipped after their native fashion and practising their native tactics. Behind this cosmopolitan force lay the strength of the legions, which from hence forward were recruited almost exclusively from the districts in which they were quartered, and rarely changed their stations. The new system had two important consequences: the first, that the Illyrian nationalities, from whom the ten legions of the Danube were raised, came to exercise a preponderating influence over the destinies of the Empire; the

second, that the Roman army became confined to garrison duty and ceased to be adequate as a striking force.

The unity of the Empire thus sharply severed from the barbarian world was conceived by Hadrian as resting, not on the supremacy of Rome amidst and above an indefinite number of loosely federated communities, bound to her by the most diverse ties of alliance and subjection—a system inherited by the principate from the Republic—but on a common nationality, a common patriotism, and a common service. It is difficult to trace the application of this concept in detail; but it is to be noted that while doing his utmost to further the diffusion of Roman municipal institutions in the provinces,[1] Hadrian took the first step towards depriving Italy of the political primacy which she had hitherto enjoyed, by dividing the peninsula into four districts, in each of which a commissioner of consular rank dispensed justice, relieving the pressure of business in the urban courts, but also marking a definite encroachment of the Imperial Government on the province assigned by Augustus to the Senate's control. Here, in fact, we touch the keynote of Hadrian's policy. While showing outward deference to the Senate, he treated it as a *quantité négligeable* in administration, and was at no pains to veil the fact that the civil service, drawn from the ranks of the equestrian order

[1] Many of the civil settlements which had sprung up (under the name of *Canabae*) in the neighbourhood of the great camps in order to supply the needs of the soldiers received charters from Hadrian.

and bound to himself by a personal tie, was the instrument with which he intended his work to be carried out. In so doing he was but carrying the ideas of Augustus (p. 17) to their logical consequence, but the thoroughness of his methods stamps him as a clear-sighted statesman. It is significant that his most trusted subordinate, Q. Marcius Turbo, was not a senator but a knight; and it was by a grave innovation that he was placed in an extraordinary command, embracing the Danube provinces and Dacia, with the nominal title of "prefect of Egypt," chosen because that office, open to knights, carried with it the command of a legionary force. Hadrian, moreover, admitted knights to the membership of his privy council, whose importance will presently be shown; but it was provided that they should not sit as assessors when senators were on their trial. Above all, the equestrian service was largely increased in numbers in consequence of the administrative reforms of Hadrian, who, besides creating fresh posts, chose the three chief secretaries of state (p. 66) from the ranks of the knights instead of employing freedmen. In one sense this may be regarded as the substitution of a constitutional for an unconstitutional system; but the real meaning of the change was that the private service of the Emperor was recognised as being in fact the true officialdom of the Roman state. In another respect, too, the anomalies of inherited tradition were smoothed away. In accordance with old Roman ideas, the equestrian service had been neither wholly military nor wholly civil; for the theory of the

RUINS OF HADRIAN'S VILLA NEAR TIVOLI.

ancient city-state was that its citizens should undergo the double training of the soldier and the statesman. But the Empire of the second century A.D., which had come to resemble the modern territorial state, did not need to exact from its civil servants a preliminary service in the field; and we therefore find that from the time of Hadrian onwards a career of purely civil office was open to a knight. The first step in this was often the tenure of the new office of *advocatus fisci* (*v. infra*); and well-paid posts created by Hadrian, *e.g.*, that of *praefectus vehiculorum* (p. 190), added to the attractions of the profession.

Hadrian was a keen student of financial problems; his biographer tells us that he made himself more intimately acquainted with the revenues and expenditure of the state than most private persons with those of their households, and that he endeavoured to equalise the burdens of the several provinces. The wasteful and oppressive system of tax-farming gave place almost entirely to that of direct collection; and the Imperial procurators were relieved of the onerous duty of pursuing defaulting debtors by the institution of the *advocati fisci*, whose task it was to represent the interest of the state in fiscal matters. At the same time, Hadrian was generous in writing off bad debts: he found on his accession that 900,000,000 sesterces (about £9,000,000) were owing to the State, and remitted the whole sum, but provided that in future arrears should be called in and taxable property freshly assessed at intervals of fifteen years —a reform which seems never to have been carried into effect. He likewise mastered the details of the

management of the vast Imperial estates, constantly increasing in extent, which were to be found in every province of the Empire, and issued an ordinance respecting them which bore his name—*Lex Hadriana*; some chapters of this are preserved in inscriptions from the province of Africa, where enormous tracts of country (*tractus*) formed part of the Imperial domain. These were administered by procurators, whose practice was to farm the revenue drawn from the estate to the middleman (*conductor*); this latter exacted from the tenants (*coloni*) contributions in kind—for the land was usually cultivated on the *métayer* system—and also forced labour. It was natural that abuses should arise under such conditions; but the *coloni*, who were "tenants of Cæsar," and could not be arbitrarily dispossessed of their holdings, might appeal to their Imperial landlord; and they now did so with effect, for Hadrian issued stringent regulations to protect them from the oppression of the tax-farmers and officials; and in setting up an altar upon which their charter was inscribed, they speak of the "sleepless vigilance with which he watches over the welfare of mankind."

Hadrian also did much to promote the one specifically Roman science, that of jurisprudence. It had been a recognised principle since the days of the Republic that every magistrate should summon a body of advisers (*consilium*) to assist him in the decision of doubtful points: but these councils were always purely informal in constitution. Augustus had formed such a *consilium* with a nucleus of twenty senators selected yearly by lot; and his successors

kept up the practice of summoning experienced advisers to their council-board, although the plan devised by Augustus fell into disuse. Hadrian made this privy council into a permanent institution; its members were formally appointed and duly salaried, and comprised in their number the most distinguished jurists of the time. With their aid he laboured to perfect that system of private jurisprudence which was Rome's chief bequest to civilisation; and by its humane provisions the horrors of slavery were to some degree mitigated and law was brought into harmony with the higher morality inculcated by stoicism.

Amongst the sources of Roman law one of the most important was the edict of the prætor—strictly speaking, a set of rules regulating the procedure of the High Court of Justice at Rome, but embodying many substantive provisions. This had in time grown to be unwieldy in bulk and unsystematic in form, through the additions made to it by successive prætors, and Hadrian entrusted the great jurist, Salvius Julianus, with the task of editing it and giving it a fixed and final form, which was then ratified by the Senate's decree. He also restricted the right of giving *responsa*—opinions on legal difficulties—to a limited number of qualified persons (*prudentes*). Such opinions had the force of law.

Amongst the minor administrative reforms due to Hadrian it will be sufficient to name the organisation of the posting-service (*cursus publicus*), which was placed under the control of *praefecti vehiculorum* charged with the supervision of large districts; the

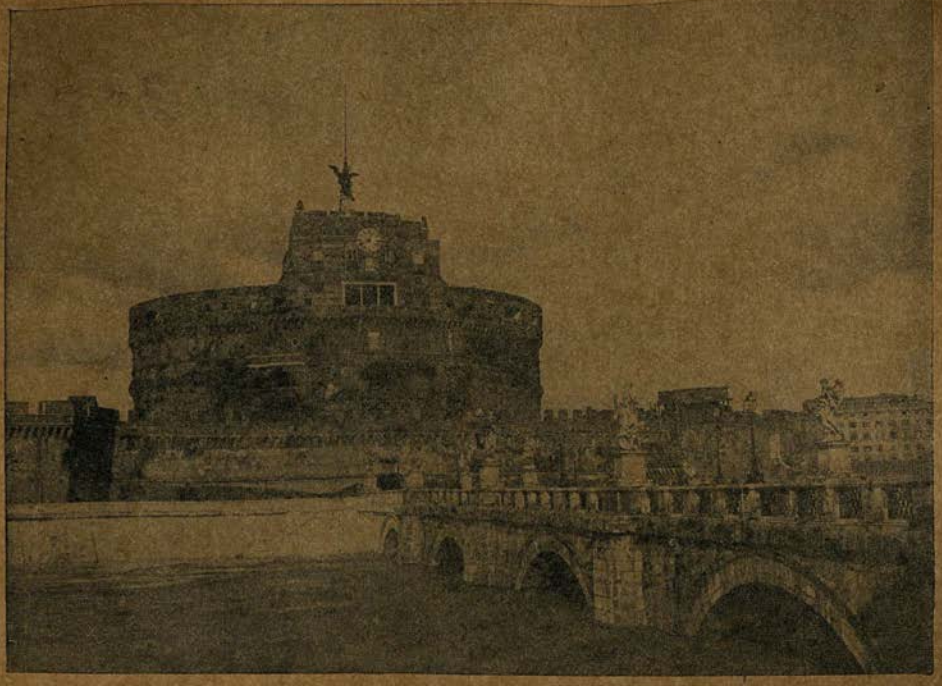
expense to the local authorities was thus diminished at the cost of the Imperial exchequer.

Yet in spite of all that he did for the Empire, Hadrian never became popular with the upper ranks of society. Fronto, the first orator of the time, who was chosen to be the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, wrote to his pupil in after-years that he had revered Hadrian as a god rather than loved him as a man; and he seems to have met with small understanding or sympathy from his kind, and to have been but little subject to external influences. His relations with his wife—who was childless—were far from happy, and it was even hinted that he had directly or indirectly caused her death. For a few years his affections were centred on his favourite Antinous, a handsome youth whom he had met in Bithynia; but in 130 A.D. Antinous was drowned in the Nile, to the bitter grief of Hadrian, who "bewailed him with a woman's tears" and caused him to be deified and worshipped throughout the Empire. A cloud of mystery overhung his death; Hadrian himself averred that it was accidental, but it was generally believed that it was an act of sacrifice, offered to the gods in order to avert a doom that threatened the Emperor.

Towards the end of Hadrian's second journey to the East the last great revolt of the Jews broke out in Judæa. Hadrian had no sympathy with the Jewish religion and forbade the practice of circumcision; he also decreed the foundation of a colony—Ælia Capitolina—on the site of Jerusalem, and the building of a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on Mount Zion. Since the destruction of their Temple the Jews

had not ceased to nurse hopes of a Messiah who should restore the kingdom to Israel; and the chief doctor of the time, Rabbi Akiba, fostered the belief that the hour was come. The leaders of the rebellion were a priest, Eleazar, and a fanatical bandit, surnamed Bar-Cocheba, "the Son of the Star." At first the government held the affair of small moment; but it was soon found that the Jews were desperate and that nothing but a war of extermination would bring peace. The governors of Syria and Judæa could make no headway against the insurgents; Hadrian was forced to take the field in person and to send for an experienced general, Julius Severus, who had just served a term of command in Britain. The rebels were hunted from cavern to cavern, and at last, after three years of war, all that remained were cooped up in the fortress of Bether, some miles to the south-west of Jerusalem, and starved out. No mercy was shown; Judæa was all but depopulated, and for the future it was ordained that no Jew might set foot in Jerusalem save once in the year. The vision of the Messianic kingdom vanished for ever.

The last years of Hadrian were clouded by an illness which began in A.D. 136. He built himself a splendid mausoleum in the gardens of Domitia, beyond the Tiber, which, long since stripped of its statues and monuments, now frowns on Rome as the Castle of St. Angelo. Having no natural successor, he was forced to seek an heir by adoption, and found one in L. Ceionius Commodus, a man of pleasure who seems to have had little to recommend him but his good looks. He received the name L. Ælius Cæsar



CASTEL ST. ANGELO.
(*Mautsoleum of Hadrian.*)

and the tribunician power, and was placed in command of the army of the Danube in order to learn the trade of government. At the close of the year 137 A.D. he returned to Rome, and was about to deliver an address of congratulation to Hadrian on January 1, 138 A.D., when he died suddenly from hemorrhage. He left a son, L. Verus, seven years of age, who, though he had become Hadrian's grandson by adoption, had not received the title of Cæsar. It was impossible for a child to succeed immediately to the principate, and Hadrian, feeling that his end was near, adopted an elderly and thoroughly respectable senator, T. Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus, who at once received the chief powers of the *princeps* and the title of Imperator. He was obliged in his turn to adopt the young L. Verus, and also his own nephew, M. Annius Verus, who was eighteen years old.

The succession was now secure, but Hadrian's choice caused much heartburning amongst the hard-working public servants who considered themselves more fitted for the principate than a dissolute courtier or an estimable nonentity. Embittered by suffering, the Emperor, it is said, became cruel and suspicious. In A.D. 136 his brother-in-law, Ursus Servianus, who was ninety years old, was put to death together with his grandson, whom he doubtless hoped that Hadrian would designate as his successor. These executions cast a shadow over Hadrian's last years and destroyed whatever popularity he still enjoyed. In A.D. 138 his sufferings became intense. We are told that Servianus had prayed that Hadrian might long for

death in vain, and his petition was now answered. The end came on July 10th, and in his last moments the Emperor became for the first time a true poet, addressing his departing soul in lines which will never die :

Tell me, sweet flitting soul, I pray,
Guest and companion of my clay,
Whither away, whither away,
So pale, so stiff, so bare to-day,
Never to play, never to play ?

Thus died the only man of genius amongst the Emperors of Rome. Had the Senate been permitted to work its will, his memory would have fared like those of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian; but the influence of Antoninus and the fear of the army secured him a place amongst the Immortal Gods.

VI

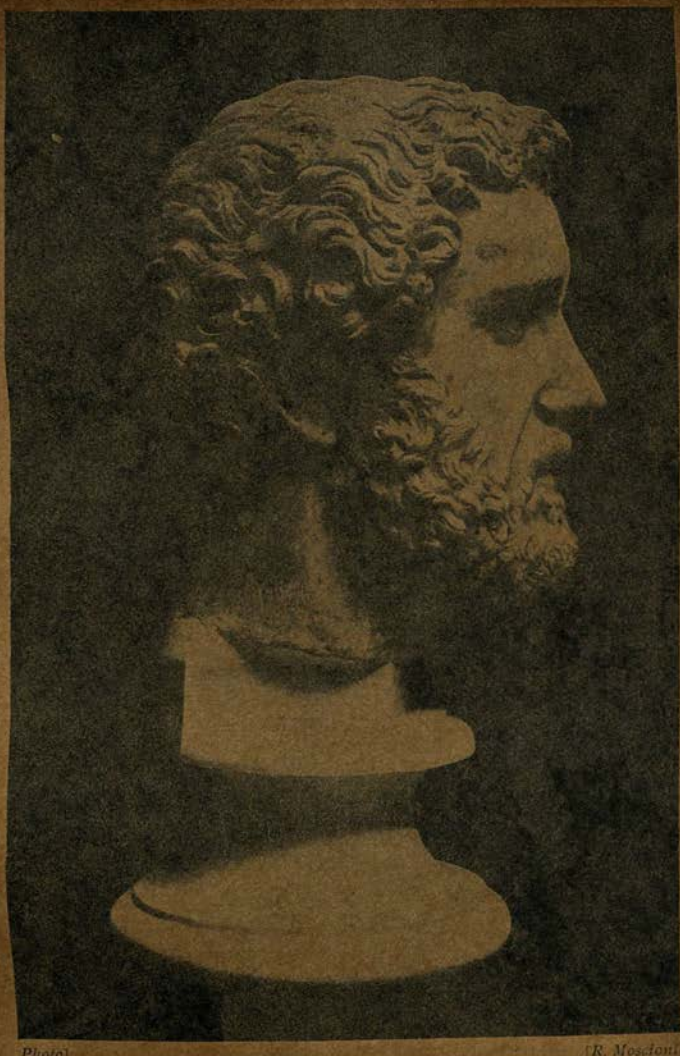
THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES

THE new Emperor was fifty-two years old, and had filled important posts in the official world. He had for a time administered justice in Italy as one of the four consulars appointed by Hadrian (p. 185), and after a term of office as governor of Asia, had returned to Rome to take a seat at the council-board. He was a rich squire of simple tastes and blameless life, possessed of large estates in Southern Etruria, upon which he loved to live the life of a country gentleman, when freed from the cares of government. Within a few months of his accession to the principate, the Senate conferred upon him the surname *Pius*, by which he has ever since been known to the world. To the Roman of the Empire the epithet could not fail to recall the hero with whose name it had been indissolubly linked by Vergil; and, indeed, the conception of Æneas, in its strength and in its weakness, might well seem to have been realised in Antoninus. His justice, humanity, and tenderness were never called in question, and the name he bore denoted the source

from which these virtues flowed—unswerving and affectionate loyalty to every natural tie or claim. We are told that Hadrian's gaze rested upon him as he supported his aged father-in-law at the entry of the Senate-house and divined in him a worthy successor; and from the moment of his adoption he attended the dying Emperor with filial solicitude, and welcomed to his home the two sons whom Hadrian had bidden him adopt in place of those of his own blood, who had both died young. Verus, indeed, was no worthy inmate of that simple household, for he grew up to be luxurious and immoral like his father; but in his nephew, who took the name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Pius found a child after his own heart. In two passages of his Meditations, Marcus draws a picture of his adoptive father, which resolves itself into a catalogue of the simpler virtues, and addresses to himself the precept, which throughout life he strove to follow, "Do all things as the disciple of Antoninus." In one particular only did Pius depart from the wishes expressed by Hadrian. The dying Emperor had designed that Marcus should marry the sister of Verus, whilst the younger of the princes should become the husband of Faustina, the daughter of Antoninus. But Pius willed otherwise. He recognised the immeasurable superiority of Marcus, and in 145 A.D. gave him his daughter in marriage. A year later he raised him to the rank of co-regent, with the title of Cæsar, which was withheld from Verus. Antoninus had lost his own wife, Faustina the elder, in A.D. 140. A temple was built in her

honour beside the Sacred Way, which still stands as the church of St. Lorenzo in Miranda; and Pius remained faithful to her memory, according to the standard of his age, for he never married again, but contracted a less formal tie with one of her freedwomen.

But if Antoninus recalled "*Pius Æneas*" by presenting a pattern of domestic virtue, he may also be described, in words applied by a modern critic to Vergil's hero, as "wanting in energy, spontaneity, intellectual resource and insight." In a word, though an excellent man, he was not a great ruler. It may be said that after the constructive reforms of Hadrian the Empire needed a time of rest, and that a statesman of original ideas would have been out of place when all that was required was that the new machinery should be allowed to run smoothly. Many students, in fact, have noticed that during the reign of Antoninus the Roman Empire had no history, and have drawn the conclusion which is said to follow from that premise. But if the happiness of the Roman world was not marred, generally speaking, by war and tumult, it is to be feared that more insidious causes were at work to destroy it. Granting that the aim of government is to raise revenue with regularity and to spend it with economy, the bureaucracy perfected by Hadrian was an instrument admirably fitted for its purpose; but if this end comes to be regarded as all-important—as it inevitably does under a bureaucratic *régime*—the subject sooner or later develops into a tax-paying unit, and progress is at an end.



Photo] *[R. Moscioni*

ANTONINUS PIUS.

Signs are not wanting that the limit thus set was reached in the Golden Age of the Antonines.

It is difficult, indeed, to strike the balance of weal and woe in treating of an age which had no true historian; but the records graven in stone or written on the papyrus which the sands of Egypt have preserved from destruction show that the process of decay which was to eat out the heart of Roman civilisation had already begun. Egypt, the most populous province of the Empire and the granary of Rome, furnishes evidence whose bearing cannot be mistaken. A document of the year 154 A.D. speaks of cultivators flying from the tax-gatherer and forming bands of brigands; another dated fourteen years later tells a piteous tale of a village where the taxpayers have been reduced in number from eighty-five to ten, "of whom eight have fled." This latter document, it is true, is later than the great plague of which we shall presently have to speak, but there is no doubt that the process of depopulation was merely hastened and not initiated by that calamity.

The truth is that in government, as in other matters, the law of evolution permits no standstill, and that he who does not look forward looks backward. And in fact the age of Antoninus was one in which the eyes of Romans were fixed on their past. The leader of the literary movement of the time was Fronto (p. 191), whose writings are filled with archaïc expressions borrowed from the early Roman poets; and the same curious flavour of antiquity pervades the work of Apuleius, in spite

of all his imaginative decadence. Both these writers were natives of Africa, and it has been held that they reproduce the dialect of the original settlers in that province; but it seems certain that their archaisms are the result of deliberate affectation. Antoninus was himself imbued with the spirit of the age, and in A.D. 147 celebrated the nine-hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Rome, issuing in commemoration of the event a fine series of medallions representing the early legends of the city and its founder; at the same time he conferred privileges on the cities connected by mythology with the origin of Rome—Pallantium, whence Evander sprang, Ilium, the home of Æneas, and Lavinium, his first possession on Italian soil.

It was in the field of jurisprudence, and there only, that the reign of Antoninus could show any positive achievement. We have already seen that Hadrian had formed a school of jurists, whose most eminent members had seats on his privy council and exercised a marked influence on legislation. Their labours continued to bear fruit under his successor, and Roman law was modified in many particulars by the principles of equity upon which the dominant philosophy of Stoicism laid stress. A wider conception of humanity found expression in the provisions which facilitated the enfranchisement of slaves and limited the use of torture. It should be noted also that the Antonine jurists did much to give to Roman law the systematic form which it had hitherto lacked, and to present it in a compendious form to the student.

In other respects the government of Antoninus was conservative, if not reactionary. But out of deference to the prejudice of the Senate, the four circuit-judges of Italy were abolished, and it may have been in part from a desire to conciliate Roman society that Pius spent the whole of his reign either in the capital or on one of his neighbouring estates, leaving the provinces in the hands of governors whom he rarely displaced. It is very doubtful whether he left the shores of Italy during the whole of his principate.

The peace of the Empire was but little disturbed under Antoninus. There were slight disturbances among the Jews and the Moors, a revolt in Egypt, and some signs of trouble on the Danube and the Black Sea. The Alans began to press on the North-eastern frontier in Asia, and a band of Sarmatian raiders once crossed the Danube and the Balkans and actually penetrated as far as Greece. But the only serious military operations were those carried on in Britain by the governor, Q. Lollius Urbicus, who crushed a revolt of the Brigantes (in Yorkshire and Derbyshire) and carried on Hadrian's policy by constructing a fosse and dykes across the narrow isthmus which separates the firths of Forth and Clyde. Parallel with the earthen rampart ran a line of road, about thirty-seven miles in length, and ten fortified camps were built behind the *vallum*. Like the Wall of Hadrian, that of Antoninus did not mark the northern limit of occupation, but merely prevented inter-communication between the tribes of the pacified area and those as yet imperfectly subdued; for

there was a fortified position as far North as Ardoch, in Stirlingshire.

In the East, however, the storm clouds once more gathered on the horizon. It is true that the biographer of Pius and the later writers of historical compendia wax eloquent over the boundless veneration in which the Emperor's name was held amongst barbarian nations, whose envoys came from Bactria and India to proffer their submission; and we know that he intervened with authority in a dispute between rival claimants to the principality of Bosphorus (*i.e.*, the Crimea) and set up and put down kings in the districts which bordered the Eastern provinces. But the Parthian question was still unsettled, and the slumbering hatred of Rome provoked by Trajan's expedition was always ready to wake. Vologases III., who had ascended the throne of Parthia in A.D. 148, determined to revive the question of Armenia, still nominally under the suzerainty of Rome. It would seem that at first the influence of Pius was strong enough to avert aggressive action by diplomacy;[1] but towards the close of the reign it became evident that the rights of the paramount power could be enforced by arms alone, and we possess an inscription which shows that reinforcements were despatched to the Euphrates by Antoninus "on account of the Parthian war." Before the storm broke, however, the Emperor had

[1] Some authorities hold that Pius visited Syria in 154–5 A.D. and had an interview with Vologases; but this view rests on a misinterpretation of the twenty-third oration of the sophist Aristides, in whose mouth the elder Antoninus means Marcus Aurelius.

passed away after a brief illness (March 7, A.D. 161): in his delirium he was heard to talk of the kings who had provoked his anger, showing clearly that the war-cloud in the East was looming heavily over his thoughts, but on the third day he recovered consciousness, gave as his last watchword "Peace of mind," and after commending Marcus to the officers of the guard as his successor, fell quietly into the slumber from which there is no waking. There was not a murmur in the Senate when his deification was proposed by his successor.

The reign of Marcus Aurelius marks a turning-point in the history of mankind; but, great as is the interest which it possesses on this account, it is eclipsed by that which attaches to the human tragedy of which the Emperor was the hero. In the Meditations which he committed to writing in the night-watches spent in the camps by the Danube and the Gran, he has furnished us with the key to what he himself calls "a naked soul more visible than the body which clothes it," a soul whose thoughts may be read "as the beloved one reads all things in the lover's eyes." It was fitting that at the turning of the tide, when humanity was about to be borne by fresh currents into seas unknown, there should be exhibited to the world a pattern of the highest virtue which the spirit of antiquity could produce. Since the great critical movement in Greek philosophy had spent its force, and especially since philosophy had found a second home at Rome, it had turned aside from speculation and devoted itself to the elaboration of a rule of

Photo] [*R. Moscioni*

FUNERAL CEREMONY OF ANTONINUS PIUS.

(*The "Decursio."*)

life. The philosopher became a professional director of consciences, and in many households took the place which in the organisation of the Latin Church is filled by the confessor. "If thou art fascinated by speculative problems," says Epictetus, "sit still and meditate thereon; but never call thyself a philosopher." This exclusive devotion to moral questions was largely due to Stoicism, a system whose doctrines of detachment and self-sufficiency found a ready acceptance with higher minds in an age when despotism had made it impossible for a man to throw himself heart and soul into the service of the state. Stoicism did, indeed, endeavour to bridge the gulf between creed and conduct. The pantheism of the earlier Stoics had been so far modified that for the impersonal "world-soul" there was now substituted an infinitely beneficent providence, guiding the process of the universe to a "far off, divine event"; and the duty of man, whose soul was a spark of the divine spirit, was held to consist in placing himself in harmony with the great design, and becoming a chord

> "Of that lyre of life
> Whereon Himself, the master harp-player,
> Resolving all its mortal dissonance
> To one immortal and most perfect strain,
> Harps without pause, building with song the world."

To the Roman, it is true, a military metaphor seemed more natural, and Marcus writes: "Let the God that is within thee preside over . . . a Roman and a ruler, who has taken his post like a soldier awaiting the summons of recall." But the adherents

of this creed troubled themselves but little as to the speculative deduction of moral from metaphysical truth; for theirs was a morality touched by emotion. "Morality," it has been said, "is a kind of optimism"; and this is especially true of that which we are now considering. "All things harmonise with me," writes Marcus, "which are in harmony with thee, O universe. Nothing is too early or too late for me which is in due time for thee. All things are fruit to me which thy seasons bring, O nature; from thee are all things, in thee are all things, unto thee are all things. The poet saith, 'Dear city of Cecrops, and wilt not thou say 'Dear city of Zeus'?" But a tragic destiny had placed the Imperial mystic amid surroundings fitted to try the strongest faith. Ruling over an Empire wasted by the triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, he was compelled to forsake the society of philosophers and spend long years in harassing and doubtful warfare against the barbarian invaders who threatened to submerge Roman civilisation and extinguish the spark which Greek thought had kindled. Weak in health, he was forced to husband his strength for the colossal task imposed upon him—a task whose burden he was compelled to bear alone. For he fulfilled his own precept, "Live as on a mountain top"; and it was precisely in virtue of this fact that, however great as a man, he failed as a ruler. Uplifted on a pinnacle of splendid isolation, he loved to "retreat," as he puts it, "into the peace of his own soul"; and he therefore lacked that human sympathy which, while blessed to receive, it is still more blessed to give, and which is of para-

mount value to the ruler, since it furnishes him with the key to human nature which he needs. Such a key it was not given to Marcus Aurelius to possess.

His first act was to associate his adoptive brother, Lucius Verus, with himself in the principate as his co-equal colleague. The joint rule of the two Augusti with equal powers was without a precedent, and foreshadowed the ultimate division of the Empire. But though the harmony between the two brothers was not disturbed during the eight years of their joint rule, Verus, who was luxurious, indolent and immoral, was no fit partner for Marcus, and Antoninus Pius had shown clearly enough that he recognised this.

As was mentioned above (p. 203), hostilities with Parthia had commenced even before the death of Pius. Vologases III. overran Armenia and placed Pacorus, a prince of the royal house, upon the throne. The governor of Cappadocia, P. Ælius Severianus Maximus, promptly crossed the Euphrates, but was utterly defeated at Elegeia—the very spot where Trajan had received the homage of Parthamasiris—lost nearly his whole army, and committed suicide. The victorious Parthians invaded Syria and inflicted a second defeat on the Roman troops, commanded by L. Avidius Cornelianus. The situation was critical, and demanded the presence of an Emperor, and Marcus, hoping that his colleague might shake off his indolence and show his true mettle when tempered by the fires of war, sent him to the East in chief command. Verus left Rome in A.D. 162 and proceeded in a leisurely manner to

Antioch, where he gave himself up entirely to the life of luxury and pleasure for which alone he was fitted, leaving the war to be carried on by his *legati*. Fortunately for Rome, the military system established by Trajan and Hadrian could still produce capable commanders. In A.D. 163 Statius Priscus, who had succeeded to the command in Cappadocia, recovered Armenia, destroying the old capital, Artaxata, and building a new one, Valarshapat (now Etchmiadzin). Sohæmus, a prince of the royal blood of Parthia, but a vassal of Rome,[1] became king of Armenia, and the title *Armeniacus* was conferred on the joint Emperors.

Even before the close of the war in Armenia, fighting had commenced on the lower Euphrates. The commander-in-chief was Avidius Cassius, the son of a Syrian rhetorician named Heliodorus who had become Secretary of State under Hadrian and had attained to the viceroyalty of Egypt under his successor. His son had risen from equestrian to senatorial rank, and having held the consulship, was appointed to the command in Syria in A.D. 164. In this year Marcus gave his daughter Lucilla in marriage to Verus, who journeyed to Ephesus to meet his bride, leaving the conduct of the war to Cassius. His first task was to restore the discipline of the Syrian legions, which (as so often before) had been rendered unfit for active service by barrack life; in fact, they were unable to take the field without a stiffening of troops withdrawn from other provinces,

[1] Iamblichus describes him as a Roman senator and consul, but the statement cannot be taken seriously.

especially from the Danube.[1] Vologases took the offensive, but after a hard-fought battle at Europus, Cassius succeeded in forcing the passage of the Euphrates at Zeugma and carrying the war into Parthian territory. The district of Osrhoene fell into the hands of the Romans, together with its capital, Edessa, where the native dynast set up by Hadrian had been replaced by a puppet of Vologases. Cassius pushed on to Nisibis, which fell after a siege, and then, turning southward, drove the main Parthian force before him down the Tigris. Meantime a second column had won a victory on the right bank of the Euphrates at Sura, and, crossing the river, had stormed the fortress of Nicephorium. The united armies pressed on through Mesopotamia, and in A.D. 165 achieved the crowning triumph of the campaign by reducing the twin capitals of Parthia, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, which were burnt to the ground. The title *Parthicus Maximus* was bestowed upon Marcus and Verus, and that of *Medicus* was added in the following year, when Cassius carried his victorious advance into Media. Peace was concluded with Parthia in A.D. 166; Western Mesopotamia became a Roman province, which included Osrhoene as a vassal principality; Carrhæ was made a Roman colony. The annexation was wise, since it deprived the Parthians of the salient frontier at the point where the province of Syria was exposed to attack.

Verus now returned to Rome, and the brothers

[1] We even hear of recruiting in Italy for this expedition, a measure which by now had become rare—indeed, almost unknown.

Photo] [*Anderson*

MARCUS AURELIUS RECEIVING THE SUBMISSION OF CONQUERED GERMANS.

(*Capitol.*)

celebrated a brilliant triumph; but the tide of fortune had already begun to ebb. The troops of Avidius Cassius brought with them from Parthia the germs of a pestilence which devastated the whole Empire and left many districts practically depopulated. It was the greatest natural calamity which had befallen the Roman world, and seems to have been not the least of the factors which brought about the decline of the Empire.[1] But if the forces of destruction were thus let loose by the East upon the West, from the East came also the germs of a new civilisation. Renan, in his study of Marcus Aurelius, describes his reign with justice as "the end of the ancient world"; this does not of course mean that the fabric of Græco-Roman civilisation was dissolved in the brief space of twenty years, but that from this period dates the triumph of Eastern over Western ideas which was to transform the world. This momentous change is most clearly seen in the field of religion; for it was towards a new religion that the current of the time was set. External conditions, moreover, favoured the spread of new ideas. The unity of language and culture established throughout the Eastern Mediterranean basin by the conquests of Alexander had been embraced within the wider political unity created by Rome, which included the West also. Within the vast area ruled by the Emperors not only commodities but ideas were freely interchanged, and there was thus formed the new nationality of which we have had occasion to speak more than once, whose existence had been

[1] Inscriptions show that the plague was still raging in A.D. 182.

definitely recognised by Hadrian. But while the seat of power was in the West, which enjoyed a vast preponderance of military force, the centre of gravity in industry and commerce lay in the East, where an older and more complex civilisation than that of Rome flourished under the protection of her legions.

Hence a stream of population—whether as slaves (often transformed into citizens), traders, or adventurers—set westwards, and brought to Rome, Italy, and the Latin provinces a fund of ideas and beliefs which found ready listeners. The toleration which the Imperial government extended to almost all foreign religions permitted their diffusion to proceed unchecked, provided that the worship of the Emperors was duly carried on. But though this worship was of some value as clothing with suitable forms such patriotic feeling as could exist in the subjects of a practically absolute ruler, it was, of course, ludicrously inadequate to supply the needs of the human heart, and especially such imperious cravings as were now beginning to make themselves felt. For Greek speculation had killed the religion of the Olympic gods, and Roman absolutism had killed the religion of the state; and the individual, detached from the ties of common belief and service which had hitherto bound him to his fellows, began to seek for assurance that what he lacked in this present world would be supplied in another. It was here that the Oriental religions won an easy triumph. Widely as they differed from each other in ritual and dogma, they were alike in presupposing a certain philosophy of existence which reduced the forms of each particular

cult to symbols. The keynote of this philosophy is its dualism—the antithesis between light and darkness, spirit and matter, God and the world. We need not here follow the adepts of the higher mysticism in their speculations as to the origin of the material universe; it will suffice to say that for the immanent divinity of Greek philosophy was substituted a transcendent godhead, eternal, uncreated, and incomprehensible. From this divinity the human spirit emanates as a spark from the flame; and it follows that that spirit is capable of the eternal life which belongs to its source. But having descended into the world of matter, it is cribbed, cabined, and confined in the prison house of the body, from whose shades it struggles, by a slow and painful road, to rise once more to the eternal light. Hence the need of a redeemer who shall deliver the spirit from the body of this death, of an authoritative revelation which shall point to the source of redemption, and of sacramental mysteries by which the grace necessary to uplift the soul shall be conveyed. All these things the Oriental religions offered to their initiates, and their victory was thus assured from the first. In place of the chill and prosaic formalities of the old Roman cult they gave the transports of a mystic ecstasy which stirred the emotions to their depths; in place of the literary mythology which convention had turned into mere theatrical machinery they furnished what purported to be a scientific explanation of the universe; above all, they relieved the burdened conscience of its sense of guilt by penance and purification, heartened the soul in its struggle against the

powers of evil, and held before it the prize of a blessed immortality. Since the media of redemption consisted in symbols, or in legends symbolically interpreted, it was possible for the most diverse forms of ritual and belief, grotesque and even disgusting as they might be, to become the channels of grace. It is impossible here even to enumerate the Oriental worships which were diffused throughout the Roman Empire in the second century A.D.; but there are four which it is impossible to pass over in silence. The first is the cult of the Great Mother of Phrygia, which had been brought to Rome in response to an oracle as early as 204 B.C. and included amongst the official worships of the state, but had at first offended the taste of the Romans by the orgiastic licence of its rites and the self-mutilation of its priests, who were always natives of Asia Minor. But under the Empire all this was changed. Its spring festival, at which the strange legend of the love of Cybele for Attis and the penitential sacrifice of his manhood was dramatised, fascinated the masses with its weird excitement; to the cultured it presented a pantheistic philosophy of nature which is supposed to have been developed under the influence of Judaism, and in the second century we meet with its awe-inspiring sacrament—the baptism of blood known as the *Taurobolium*, in which the initiate descended into a pit, above which an ox was slaughtered, and arose therefrom "reborn to eternal life." Next came the worship of Isis, introduced into Rome from the valley of the Nile during the last century of the Republic, stubbornly combated at first by the conservative

Senate, viewed with disfavour by Augustus on account of Antony's connection with Egypt, yet firmly established even under the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The success of this cult was due neither to its theology, which was vague and confused, nor to its code of morals, which were very far from austere, but rather to its elaborate and impressive ritual, which was celebrated daily both at morning and at evening, and above all to the efficacy which its formulæ were held to possess in bending the will of heaven and to the precise and explicit promises of future bliss which it held out. By the close of the first century A.D. the divinities of Asia Minor and of Egypt had been followed in their Western progress by those of the further East. From Syria and the neighbouring lands came a group of Ba'alim—the Ba'al of Heliopolis, the Ba'al of Doliche, Balmarcodes (Ba'al-marqod), and others—whose worship, though local in its origin, was at the same time, by a curious paradox, universal in its significance; for the distinctive mark of Syrian theology (which was, it must be admitted, interwoven with Babylonian astrology, and for that reason all the more popular in an age of fatalism) was its insistence on the omnipotence, omnipresence and eternity of the Godhead and on the immeasurable gulf which separates the human from the divine. Nevertheless, the Syrian cults failed to achieve a great or lasting triumph, since, though their doctrine was lofty, their ritual was not attractive to the masses. It was reserved for another religion, whose home lay still further to the East, to fulfil all the conditions necessary to success. This was the

worship of Mithras, who was not so much a solar divinity as the god of that celestial light which illuminates the heavens even before the rising of the sun. As such he belonged to the pantheon worshipped by the ancestors of Hindus and Persians in the days of their union; but his importance dates from the time when the Iranian people formed their sublime conception of the world-process as a ceaseless warfare between the powers of light and darkness, in which man is called to play his part. In their struggle Mithras appears as the invincible leader of the hosts of Ahura-mazda,[1] before whom even the Spirit of Evil trembles. We cannot here trace the growth of the Mithraic religion, which was first of all profoundly influenced by Babylonian speculation and then, after detaching itself from the purer Mazdean faith of the Persians, transformed by contact with the native religions of Asia Minor. It was in this region that it assumed the form in which it was transmitted to the West: for the rulers of the half-barbarous dynasties which sprang up in the Hellenistic period based their doctrine of divine right on the possession of the *Hvareno*, a dazzling aureole of glory conceived in a quasi-material sense as emanating from the sun, but also as a token of supernatural grace descending on legitimate sovereigns; and of this grace Mithras was the dispenser. It was not, indeed, until the third century A.D. that this comfortable doctrine was turned to political use by the Emperors of Rome; but long before that date Mithraism had overspread the West to the furthest

[1] Better known as Ormuzd, the supreme principle of good.

limits of the Empire. This was because it ministered not only to the vanity of kings, but still more to the yearnings of the humble. In its subterranean chapels, before a symbolical bas-relief which represented the youthful god in Phrygian cap and flowing mantle accomplishing the mystic sacrifice of a bull, framed in many cases with a series of scenes whose meaning we can only partially recover, rich and poor, bondman and free, were initiated, grade by grade, into mysteries whose cosmic significance was perhaps only grasped by the few, but which filled all the participants with the sure and certain hope of a glorious immortality. The moral code of Mithras was purer than those of the other Eastern cults. As the god of light, Mithras was the god of truth and purity, which were the cardinal virtues of his worship; while the bracing conception of morality, not as mere abstention from prohibited acts, but as a mighty struggle in which the individual takes part as a combatant in the ever-victorious army of the powers of light, made Mithraism *par excellence* the religion of the Roman soldier and thus carried it wherever the legions set foot.

Thus by the latter half of the second century A.D. the Græco-Roman conception of the service of God and man as a civic duty imposed upon the members of a city-state was practically extinct, and the path was clear for a universal religion. But the race was not to the swift, nor the victory to the strong. The worships of which we have just spoken grew and flourished under Imperial protection because they were capable of compromise and toleration. They

rendered homage to the divinity of the Emperors; they did not exact from their adherents a single-hearted or exclusive devotion, but permitted them to make their assurance of salvation doubly sure by the cumulative effect of diverse sacraments. But it was not so with Christianity. In an age whose device was *le recherche de l'absolu*, it satisfied the desire for certitude, permitting no doubt and rejecting every compromise. With such a creed the government of the Emperors could make no peace, for they too claimed an absolute dominion, and it was inevitable that sooner or later one of the two powers which disputed the allegiance of men should yield to the other. But no one could foresee that the victory would rest with a religion which lacked social prestige and held aloof from all demonstrations of loyalty to the Empire. In fact, the reign of Marcus Aurelius was a time of sore trial for Christianity; for the popular hostility to the Christians was enhanced by the spread of the belief that the grievous calamities endured by the Roman world were due to the wrath of heaven incurred by those obstinate sectaries, and the government seized the opportunity of applying the penal laws against recusants with exceptional severity, particularly in the Western provinces, where Christianity was now rapidly gaining a foothold. It is no matter for surprise that an Emperor so humane as Marcus Aurelius should have permitted, if not encouraged, the persecution of the Christians. His philosophy did not breathe that rarefied atmosphere in which, as we are told, "all concrete religions die"; on the contrary, he shared to the full the superstitious

tendencies of his time, and sought to appease the wrath of heaven not only by reviving the half-forgotten ceremonies of the ancient Roman religion, but also by the practice of strange rites borrowed from barbarous peoples, such as the drowning of lions in the waters of the Danube. In the same hope of saving his Empire from ruin he ordered the punishment of the Christians, about whose doctrines he probably knew little and cared less; he mentions them but once in his Meditations, and then only to sneer at their readiness for death as due to "sheer love of contradiction."

His administration, indeed, furnished a visible proof that Plato was wrong in his prediction that mankind would be happy when philosophers were kings. Not that Marcus endeavoured to realise in practice the Utopian dreams of Plato. Addressing himself in his Meditations, he says, "Hope not for Plato's Republic," and, fortunately for Rome, he obeyed this precept.

But the record of his reign shows plainly the gulf which separates the ideal from the practical in politics. In the sphere of administration it shows little positive achievement, and such changes as were made tended to make the Imperial *régime* still more bureaucratic and tighten the hold of the central government over the several communities. Thus the various degrees of the official hierarchy were, as it seems, now distinguished by titles: henceforth the senator is regularly called *vir clarissimus* and the equestrian service has three grades—*vir eminentissimus*, *vir perfectissimus* and *vir egregius*. The circuit judges of

Italy were restored under the name of *iuridici*, and the administration of the municipalities by Imperial commissioners (*curatores*, see p. 168) became a general practice. Though treating the Senate with unvarying respect, Marcus refused to take the oath that he would put no senator to death, and in every way showed that he accepted in their entirety the rights as well as the duties of autocracy. His financial policy (or lack of policy) was imprudent and even disastrous; it is true that Verus was perhaps extravagant and that the calamities which befel the Empire could not have been foreseen; but Pius had left the treasury full, yet his successor was obliged to sell the crown jewels and to debase the coinage. The best that can be said of his government is that under it that transformation of law and justice by the principles of equity which had begun under Antoninus proceeded unchecked.

We must now turn to the Northern frontier, where the tempest was brewing which was to rage without cessation throughout the latter part of the reign of Marcus. It has already been mentioned that the expeditionary force commanded by Avidius Cassius was in part composed of legions drawn from the armies of the Danube; the defences of the Empire were thus weakened at a critical point, and the barbarous tribes beyond the river, impelled by land-hunger and pressed forward by the migratory movements of other peoples in their rear, mustered their forces and prepared to invade the provinces which sixty years of peace and prosperity had made a rich and coveted prize. Amongst the numerous peoples

which took part in the great coalition against Rome, three names are of cardinal importance. On the upper Danube, the Marcomanni in Bohemia and the Quadi in Moravia and Upper Hungary—the latter ruled by a vassal-king appointed by Antoninus Pius—were the leading nations; both these came of German stock. Further to the East the Sarmatian Iazyges dwelt in the plain of Hungary from the Danube to the Theiss, hemmed in between the provinces of Pannonia and Dacia. Even before the close of the Parthian war the Marcomanni had shown themselves hostile, but no sense of insecurity seems to have been felt when Marcus and Verus celebrated their triumph in the summer of 166 A.D. Then the storm broke, and a flood of barbarians swept across the Danube, overran Rætia, Noricum and Pannonia, surmounted the barrier of the Alps, and reached the shores of the Adriatic. Opitergium (Oderzo) was destroyed and Aquileia (not far from Triest) besieged; Italy was threatened with an irruption of barbarians such as it had not known since the days of Marius. The guards were at once despatched to the frontier, but were defeated with the loss of their commander, Furius Victorinus, and at the beginning of 167 A.D. both Emperors took the field. Before leaving Rome, Marcus conferred the title of Cæsar on his two sons, L. Ælius Commodus and M. Annius Verus, aged five and three. Fortunately the defence of the Northern provinces was in capable hands. T. Claudius Pompeianus, who, like Avidius Cassius, was a native of Syria, commanded in Lower Pannonia, and M. Claudius Fronto, who had distinguished

Photo] [*Anderson.*

MARCUS AURELIUS SACRIFICING ON THE CAPITOL.

himself in the Parthian war, in Upper Mœsia. Both were first-rate soldiers, and by the summer of 167 A.D. the danger in the upper Danube region was past; but the German tribes, turning eastward, overran northern Dacia and seized the gold mines of Alburnum; to meet the crisis Dacia was added to Fronto's command, and the tide of invasion seems to have been stemmed. Of the events of 168 A.D. we know little; it was probably in this year that the future Emperor Pertinax, whose soldierly qualities had attracted the notice of Pompeianus, gradually cleared Rætia and Noricum of the invaders. The Augusti returned to winter at Aquileia, whence they set out for Rome at the beginning of the year 169 A.D. On the journey Verus had an apoplectic seizure, and died after three days' illness. Marcus caused him to be buried in Hadrian's mausoleum and secured for him the honour of consecration; then he turned his face once more to the North, accompanied by the new prætorian prefect, M. Bassæus Rufus, a rude and unlettered but thoroughly capable soldier,[1] whose figure is familiar to us from the sculptured monuments of the time. For almost eight years the Emperor was absent from Rome, except for a brief visit in A.D. 174. He gave Lucilla, now twenty-one years of age, in marriage to Pompeianus, who was an elderly widower, and left his son-in-law to represent him in Rome. It is impossible to trace in detail the campaigns which followed, for though the story is told in the bas-reliefs of the column which was

[1] He had risen from the rank of centurion, held various provincial procuratorships, and finally became viceroy of Egypt.

erected in imitation of that of Trajan after the triumph of Marcus, the artist fails to convey his meaning in the form of an intelligible narrative. Probably, indeed, the operations were too disconnected to lend themselves to such treatment, and it may be that typical scenes and salient events were selected. The most famous of these episodes is that which Christian tradition describes as the miracle of the Thundering Legion. The legend runs that when the troops of Marcus, worn out by heat and thirst, were at the point of defeat, the prayers of a Christian legion—henceforward called the "Thundering"—unlocked the windows of heaven and brought a refreshing rain to the Romans, while hail and lightnings discomfited their foes. The details of the story will not bear criticism, but the phenomenon was sufficiently striking to be represented on the column, where a giant form drips water from its arms and hair upon the exhausted Romans.

The war fell into two distinct periods, known officially as the *bellum Germanicum* and *bellum Sarmaticum*. In the former of these Marcus seems to have aimed first at the reduction of the Quadi, who were granted favourable terms in order to thrust a neutral wedge into the hostile coalition; then the Marcomanni were attacked and, as we are told, utterly destroyed at the crossing of the Danube. These successes justified Marcus in assuming the title of *Germanicus*, though the complete pacification of the Germans was a toilsome process, which occupied more than one further campaign. Then came the Sarmatian war, in which

the chief enemy were the Iazyges. The Emperor transferred his headquarters from Carnuntum on the Danube to Sirmium on the Save: but he was obliged to hasten back to Germany by the treachery of the Quadi, who violated their treaty and gave support to the Iazyges. Nevertheless, the Romans were again victorious, and Marcus assumed the title *Sarmaticus* in A.D. 175. The final subjugation of the Northern barbarians seemed close at hand, when the news came that Avidius Cassius, to whom had been entrusted an extraordinary command in the East after the return of Verus to Rome, had proclaimed himself Emperor in Syria. Our chief authority, Cassius Dio, tells us that the Empress Faustina was privy to the revolt, fearing the consequences to herself should Marcus die leaving a mere child to succeed him. Be this as it may, Cassius seems to have been misled by a false report of the Emperor's death—he actually caused him to be deified—and then to have felt that it was too late to retrace his steps. Marcus hastily made peace with the Iazyges, summoned his son Commodus [1] to his side and invested him with the *toga virilis*, and then set out for the East. Egypt was on the side of Cassius,[2] but the governors of Bithynia and Cappadocia remained faithful, and on the news of the Emperor's approach the usurper was murdered by his soldiers. Nevertheless, Marcus spent more

[1] The younger of the two Cæsars (p. 222) had died in A.D. 169.

[2] Cassius had been called in in 172 A.D. to suppress a revolt of the Bucoli, a tribe of herdsmen and brigands living in the north-west of the Delta, who almost succeeded in capturing Alexandria.

than a year in visiting Egypt and the Eastern provinces. In A.D. 176 he lost his wife Faustina, whose infidelities—if the story be true—he had borne with resignation and now rewarded with apotheosis. Fabia, the sister of Verus, laid siege to the Emperor's heart, but he preferred an unofficial union with the daughter of one of his agents. In the autumn he returned to Italy, pausing at Athens to receive initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries, and having raised his son to the rank of Imperator, celebrated with him a joint triumph over the Germans and Sarmatians. Soon afterwards Commodus received the title of Augustus and became co-equal with his father.

The rebellion in the East had compelled Marcus to leave his work in the North unfinished. It had been his intention to annex the territory of the Iazyges and Marcomanni, and thus to form two new provinces; but he had been obliged to content himself with exacting the restoration of the Roman subjects kidnapped by the enemy, who numbered more than 160,000, and to establish a neutral zone some ten miles wide on the left bank of the Danube, while conceding to the Iazyges a right of way through Dacia for the purpose of intercourse with their Eastern kinsmen. But the depopulation caused by war and pestilence led to measures of far-reaching importance. Marcus was obliged to call in the help of Germans against Germans, and thus to inaugurate the system of dependence upon barbarian aid which was in time to bring about the disintegration of the Empire; and he also settled on the waste lands

of Pannonia and the neighbouring provinces tens of thousands of barbarians in a half-free condition, bound to the soil by a species of serfdom, and at the same time kept under military discipline and liable to serve in defence of the frontiers. Thus began the momentous process by which the declining population of the Empire was replaced by a fresh stock of Northern peoples; for each succeeding Emperor followed the precedent set by Marcus, until a century later there was not a province free from the presence of the barbarian settler.

The peace of 175 A.D. lasted but a short time. Two years later war broke out once more with the Marcomanni, and as the local commanders were unable to attain a decisive success, Marcus and his son left Rome for the Danube in A.D. 178. In this and in the following year the Roman army was victorious, and once more it seemed as though Marcus was about to achieve the conquest for which he had spent so many years of toil and hardship. But destiny willed otherwise. In the spring of A.D. 180 he fell ill, perhaps of the plague, and died on March 17. The philosopher's tragedy had reached its close; the world's tragedy was now to begin.

From the days of Julian the Apostate critics have reproached Marcus with the failure to see that his son was no fit ruler for the Roman world. They have suggested that he might have set aside Commodus and adopted his son-in-law Pompeianus, who was at least respectable and probably not incompetent to rule. But this would almost certainly

have entailed civil war, and Marcus naturally preferred to leave his son surrounded by good advisers rather than to face so fearful a responsibility whilst grave dangers were threatening the Empire. No doubt, however, he was blind to the vices of Commodus, as he had been to those of Verus, for the worst side of human nature was a closed book to him. Commodus is painted by ancient historians as a character unredeemed by a single positive virtue, and no evidence which we possess entitles us to dispute the accuracy of the picture. He was cowardly, cruel, vain, superstitious, and utterly immoral; he showed not the slightest interest in the affairs of government, and spent the whole of his reign in the pursuit of pleasure, preferring the company of actors, jockeys, and gladiators to that of statesmen and falling under the dominion of a succession of favourites, who enriched themselves beyond the dreams of avarice by selling the offices of state to the highest bidder. Within a few weeks of his father's death he shook himself free from the influence of Pompeianus, and concluded a peace with the barbarians, whose conditions—had they been observed—might be regarded as favourable, if it were allowed that the policy of annexation was impracticable. Then he set his face towards Rome and its pleasures.

His first act was to celebrate a triumph, at which his chamberlain, a freedman named Saoterus, rode in his car; and from that moment the reign of the favourites began. Happily for the Empire, the governorships and chief official posts were held

by men of tried capacity and integrity, who owed their advancement to Marcus; and the able prefect of the guards, Tarrutenius Paternus, held the reins of government for some little time. In 182 A.D., however, a conspiracy against the life of Commodus was formed by his sister Lucilla, her cousin Quadratus, and a young man—probably Lucilla's stepson—named Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus. Quintianus rushed into the presence of Commodus as he was entering the theatre and drew his sword, but paused to utter the words, "The Senate sends you this." He was at once overpowered; but the consequence of his act was disastrous. Lucilla, Quadratus, and the other conspirators were of course executed; but what was more important, Tigidius Perennis, who had shortly before been made joint prefect of the guard, seized the opportunity to bring about the fall of Paternus, who was really innocent of all share in the conspiracy. Perennis was henceforward the real ruler of the Empire. It is not easy to form a judgment as to his conduct of affairs. Cassius Dio, who, as a senator, was most certainly not biassed in his favour, tells us that he was incorruptible and circumspect, and so much may be set down in his favour. But, like all favourites in all ages, he certainly encouraged his Imperial master in his career of licence, and probably lent himself to the intrigue by which Commodus got rid of his wife, Crispina, of whom he had become weary after four years of marriage. She was banished to Capri on a charge of unfaithfulness and there executed. Above all, he was the ally of Commodus in the truceless war

Photo] [*R. Moscioni.*

COMMODUS AS HERCULES.

(*Capitol.*)

which the young Emperor, with the cry of Quintianus ringing in his ears, henceforward waged against the Senate. It was not enough that many of its principal members were put to death on charges of treason—that was nothing new; Perennis seems to have taken a further step, and anticipated the great change which was ere long to take place by ousting the senatorial order from its posts of authority and placing men of equestrian rank in command of the armies. We are told that his own sons were thus set over the armies of the Danube, with the view of supporting a *pronunciamiento* in favour of their father. But the times were scarcely ripe for the change contemplated by Perennis. In A.D. 185 a deputation, 1,500 strong, from the army of Britain marched to Rome, protested against the appointment of generals of equestrian status, and demanded the head of Perennis. Commodus, who was before all things a coward, at once granted their request, and added to his titles—which since 183 A.D. comprised the surname Pius—that of *Felix*, in honour of his deliverance from danger! Perennis was succeeded as favourite by the chamberlain Cleander, who was raised to the command of the guards. Cleander's reign lasted for four years, during which he amassed fabulous wealth by the sale of offices and favours; a great part of his gains, however, he handed over to the Emperor, whose harem and other pleasures entailed vast expense. At length, in A.D. 189, the prefect of the corn-supply took advantage of a famine in Rome to inflame the minds of the populace against Cleander. A riot broke out in the circus;

the mob sought out Commodus in one of his villas and compelled him in terror to order the execution of the favourite. Commodus now fell under the influence of his principal mistress, Marcia (who is said to have been a Christian), his chamberlain, Eclectus, and the new commandant of the guard, Æmilius Lætus. But the intoxication of empire had turned his brain. He rebaptized Rome "the colony of Commodus," identified himself with a series of divinities, more particularly with Hercules, and gave new names to the months in his own honour. He had long prided himself on his prowess as a gladiator, and at length determined to appear before the people of Rome on the 1st of January, A.D. 193, on which day he would become consul for the eighth time, in the combats of the arena. This was too much. The three favourites determined to rid the world of him. They gave him poison, but it failed to take effect; at length a powerful athlete was suborned to strangle him in his bath. His memory was declared accursed, his statues destroyed, and his monuments defaced. Fate had written large on the page of history its criticism of autocracy, by decreeing that the son of the best of Emperors should be numbered amongst the worst.

VII

THE DYNASTY OF THE SEVERI

THE murderers of Commodus lost no time in filling the vacant throne. Their choice rested on P. Helvius Pertinax, who had risen from an obscure station to the highest military commands by his soldierly qualities and strict maintenance of discipline. It is improbable that he was privy to the assassination of Commodus, but he showed no hesitation when Lætus, who, as commandant of the guards, controlled the situation in Rome, invited him to assume the government. The choice of the prætorians was ratified by the Senate, which Pertinax treated with marked deference, reaping therefor a harvest of popularity with the order so long flouted and persecuted by Commodus. But nothing could restore to the Senate the power which had passed into other hands: only the support of the army could give the *princeps* security for the tenure of his power. Now Pertinax had provoked murmurs amongst the legions under his command by the severity of his discipline, and the prætorians, whom Commodus had pampered, soon found him intolerable. Economy, even par-

simony, was needed to restore the solvency of the treasury, which the costly follies of the preceding reign had beggared; and the sale of Commodus' effects barely enabled Pertinax to pay to the guards one half of their promised donative. It was no matter for surprise that they should lend an ear to the specious promises of pretenders. One of these, the consul Sosius Falco, was within an ace of securing the throne by a *pronunciamiento*; but Pertinax, who was absent from Rome, returned in haste, and was in time to save Falco from condemnation by the Senate. Then Lætus, who had been secretly intriguing against the Emperor, provoked an *émeute* of the guards, who invaded the Palatine and murdered Pertinax on March 28th, after a reign of less than three months. The events which followed are variously narrated by the historians: the most dramatic version is that which tells how the Empire was formally put up to auction in the prætorian camp and sold to the highest bidder. This was M. Didius Severus Julianus, a senator of at least sixty years of age, whose belated ambition was not justified by any conspicuous talents or successes. It was easy for him to overcome the pretensions of his rival, Flavius Sulpicianus, the father-in-law of Pertinax, not only by outbidding his offers, but also by pointing to the vengeance which Sulpicianus would assuredly exact from the murderers of his son-in-law; and the terrified Senate hastened to acquiesce in the choice of the soldiery. But the guards were sadly mistaken when they supposed that their act would suffice to bring back the golden days of Commodus.

As it had been on the fall of Nero, so it was now: the last word rested with the legions. Since A.D. 68, moreover, the preponderance of the army of the Danube had become firmly established. Not only was it the strongest in numbers and the most inured to warfare, but it was within striking distance of Italy, which must inevitably fall a prey to its advance. No sooner had the news of Didius' accession reached the Danube than L. Septimius Severus, the governor of Upper Pannonia,[1] summoned his troops to avenge the murder of Pertinax, whose exploits in the wars of Marcus Aurelius were still fresh in their memories. They obeyed his call with enthusiasm, and marching southwards, crossed the undefended passes of the Austrian Alps and descended upon Italy, where the fleet stationed at Ravenna joined their standards. Julianus' cause was hopeless from the first. The guards refused to fight. The Senate first declared Severus a public enemy and then (on Julianus' proposal) an Imperial colleague; finally, when he appeared at the gates of Rome and demanded the punishment of the murderers of Pertinax, Didius Julianus was formally deposed on the motion of the consul, Silius Messalla, and immediately murdered in his deserted palace by a common soldier (June 1, A.D. 193).

Severus lost no time in making it plain that he was the representative of the legions. His first act was to summon the guards to his camp. They came in fear and trembling, and were at once disarmed and disbanded. Then the army of the Danube made

[1] Von Domaszewski has tried to show that Severus' *coup d'état* was prepared while Commodus still lived; but this cannot be proved.

its entry into Rome. The streets were filled with a gay crowd in holiday attire, and the scene was a brilliant one as the Emperor, in civil dress, marched to the Capitol at the head of his legions; but the Romans saw in this uncouth soldiery their new masters, and trembled. The legionaries threatened to sack the conquered city, and there was some looting here and there; but Severus was a firm disciplinarian, and there was hard fighting in prospect. He remained in Rome for a month in order to set the affairs of the city in order. A decree of the Senate was passed at his request making it unlawful for the Emperor to put a senator to death without trial by his peers. Probably Severus never intended to observe it; but it served its purpose by securing for the time the loyalty of the Senate. Pertinax was deified, and his name was added to the list of the Emperor's titles. A new guard was formed by drafting picked men from the legions which had espoused Severus' cause, and so Italy lost another privilege, that of being the recruiting district for the household troops.

The first task which lay before Severus was the assertion of his authority in the East, where the Syrian legions had proclaimed their commander, C. Pescennius Niger Justus, Emperor at Antioch. Niger enjoyed, as it would seem, a certain popularity in Rome, and he could count, like Avidius Cassius before him, on the latent antagonism between East and West, which was to issue finally in the disruption of the Empire; but his troops were inferior to those of Europe, and he was himself no match for

Severus either in generalship or diplomacy. There was yet a third army to be reckoned with—that which was occupying Britain under the command of Decimus Clodius Albinus, a distinguished soldier who might well challenge Severus' title; and it was all-important to secure his neutrality during the coming struggle. This end Severus achieved by a master-stroke of policy. He offered to Albinus the title of Cæsar with the prospect of succession to the Empire, and this was accepted by the governor of Britain, who can hardly be acquitted of lack of foresight, seeing that Severus was the father of two sons and would inevitably aspire to become the founder of a new dynasty. However, the ruse served its turn, and Severus was free to throw the bulk of his army against his Eastern rival, while his brother, P. Septimius Geta, protected the Danube frontier as governor of the three Dacias. Niger had secured the fortress of Byzantium, and his troops gained a slight success at the expense of Severus' advance-guard; but the Emperor followed in person, and, having detached a force under L. Marius Maximus to contain the garrison of Byzantium, crossed the Hellespont and landed at Cyzicus, where the Asiatic troops under Asellius Æmilianus were signally defeated. Niger now left Byzantium and endeavoured to check the advance of Severus, but was routed near Nicæa and fled to Antioch with the remains of his army. He had formed alliances with the powers of the Further East, but the Parthian kingdom was now nearing its dissolution, and no aid came to Niger save a small force sent by a Mesopotamian

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

sheikh. In a final battle the generals of Severus forced the passes of the Taurus, and Antioch lay at their mercy. Niger fled eastwards, but was overtaken and killed before he could reach the Euphrates, towards the close of A.D. 194. Severus meted out a terrible punishment to the individuals and cities which had ranged themselves on his opponent's side, and spent the year A.D. 195 in chastising the Eastern vassals of Rome. Crossing the Euphrates, he fixed his headquarters at Nisibis, which became a Roman colony and also a strong fortress commanding Mesopotamia and held by a prefect of equestrian rank. Three columns harried the surrounding districts, but for the present no advance was made against the Parthian capital. Meanwhile Byzantium, the last refuge of Niger's adherents, sustained a memorable siege, and only yielded to the pressure of famine in the spring of A.D. 196. Its walls were razed, and it was assigned as a tributary village to the neighbouring town of Perinthus. Thus Severus sacrificed to his vindictive passion the key of the Mediterranean. The mistake was one which cost Rome dear.

The time had now come to settle accounts with Albinus, who had at last been forced in self-defence to assume the style of Augustus. We are not fully informed as to the reasons or the circumstances of this act, but it is significant that towards the close of A.D. 195 Severus, by a transparent fiction, proclaimed himself the son of Marcus Aurelius, and thus claimed the prestige of legitimate descent from the Antonine dynasty. Next year we find Albinus in Gaul, which

was the home of particularist tendencies. He fixed his headquarters at Lyons and secured the support of the legions of the Rhine, Spain, and Switzerland. Severus returned from the East by forced marches, crossed the Balkans, and reached Viminacium, where he conferred the rank of Cæsar upon his elder son, Bassianus, who at the same time became the unworthy bearer of the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Thence the legions of the East and the Danube marched through the Tyrol and Switzerland into Gaul, while Severus, as it would seem, paid a flying visit to Rome in order to confirm the wavering loyalty of the Senate. After some preliminary fighting, in which the troops of Albinus gained the advantage, the decisive battle took place in the plain to the north of Lyons. The contemporary historian, Cassius Dio, assures us that 150,000 men fought on either side. The battle was stubbornly contested, and Severus was exposed to great danger when rallying his broken troops, but a cavalry attack by Lætus, who was believed to have held his men in reserve until he could decide the issue, sufficed to turn the scale. Albinus perished, probably by his own hand (February 19, A.D. 197); Lyons fell a prey to the soldiery of Severus and never (in ancient times) recovered from the horrors of the sack.

Severus was now firmly established upon the throne of the Cæsars. He was fifty years of age, but his strength and energy were unimpaired, and he was determined to exert his supreme authority without restraint and without disguise. An African by birth, he came of a family which spoke Punic

more readily than Latin, and was the first Emperor given to Rome by the country whose natives had now succeeded the Romanised Spaniards as leaders of the literary and intellectual movement of the time. He was cruel and treacherous in the pursuit of his ends, and his revenge was terrible; but he was free from degrading vices, and devoted his time and energy unsparingly to the reorganisation of the Imperial government. On June 2, A.D. 197, Severus re-entered Rome, and punished the supporters of Albinus with relentless severity. Sixty-four senators were brought to trial, and twenty-nine of these were put to death. The affiliation of the Emperor to the Antonine dynasty was emphasised by the apotheosis of his "brother" Commodus; the young Antoninus received the title of *Imperator destinatus*, which he exchanged in the following year for that of Augustus. On that occasion his younger brother, L. Septimius Geta, was raised to the rank of Cæsar. Severus was for the second time obliged to leave Rome after a brief sojourn by the receipt of disquieting news from the East, where the Parthians had invaded Mesopotamia and were besieging Nisibis. In the late summer of A.D. 197 he set forth, accompanied by his family, and proceeded directly to Nisibis, leaving his wife and children at Antioch. The Parthians retired at the news of his approach, but he resolved to exact a signal vengeance for their violation of Roman territory. Following the precedent of Trajan (p. 174), he marched southwards by the side of the Euphrates, while a fleet kept pace with his army. Babylon and Seleucia were deserted by the enemy, and Ctesiphon

made but a poor show of resistance to the Roman arms. Severus then ascended the Tigris, perhaps with the intention of asserting Roman supremacy in Armenia, but met with a check in the obstinate resistance of Hatra, a stronghold of the Mesopotamian Arabs. At length he turned his steps once more westwards, having earned a cheap triumph and the title of *Parthicus Maximus*. The most important result of his Eastern campaigns was the creation of a new power in the desert-city of Palmyra, which had always commanded an important trade-route to the East and now saw a brilliant future assured to it by the favour of Severus, who raised it to the rank of a colony. Its principal family, the Odænathi,[1] received the gift of citizenship from the Emperor, who little thought that before long they would make Palmyra for a brief space the rival of Rome herself.

In A.D. 202 Severus left Syria and paid a visit to Egypt, still, no doubt, the richest of his dominions, but already groaning under the pressure of taxation which, as the papyri of the time show, was in places well-nigh intolerable. Severus took a step which was deeply significant when he bestowed a charter of self-government upon the city of Alexandria and inaugurated the policy of effacing the distinctions between the various grades of his subjects, which his successor carried to its logical conclusion.[2] In the autumn he returned to Rome, and refused the

[1] It is convenient thus to describe them, although they bore other names beside that of Odænathus.

[2] In the kingdom of Egypt local self-government had hitherto been unknown.

triumph offered to him by the Senate, though he permitted the erection of the arch which stands at the north-west corner of the Forum and with its map-like reliefs depicts some episodes of his wars in the East. The peace of the Roman world was not again seriously disturbed until the closing years of the reign.

Severus was a statesman of no mean ability. Had he been followed by a series of rulers capable of understanding and developing his policy, the transition from the principate of Augustus to the absolute monarchy of Diocletian would have been effected by a sure, if gradual, process, and Rome might have been spared the terrible anarchy of the third century. He was not a military despot of the ordinary type, nor was he by any means a great soldier; it seems that he began his career as *advocatus fisci* (p. 188), and his chief interest probably lay in questions of administration and finance. But he saw clearly that the power of the Emperors rested on the support of the army, and that support he was determined never to lose. It was reported of him that on his deathbed he advised his sons to heap riches on the soldiers and treat the rest of their subjects with contempt, and, whether or no he actually uttered the words, they expressed his policy with brutal frankness. The legionaries received higher pay and were allowed to wear the gold ring, a distinction hitherto reserved for the equestrian order. Above all, the restrictions laid upon the marriage of common soldiers, so necessary to the maintenance of military discipline, were removed; henceforth the legionary lived with his

family and only appeared in camp for parade or other duties. Centurions acquired the rank of knights on their promotion; veterans were exempted from all municipal burdens in their towns of residence. Three legions were added to the permanent establishment; they received the title of *Parthicae*, and were specially devoted to the Imperial house. They were commanded not by senators but by knights, and one of them, the second, was quartered at Albano. This was a brutal assertion of the subjection of Italy, which had up till now seen no legions encamped upon its soil.

It will be seen that these changes served to impair rather than to increase the efficiency of the army, which became an instrument not of warfare but of despotism. The frontier policy of the reign was likewise dictated by no considerations save those of convenient defence. The evidence of excavations tends to show that the Wall of Antoninus in Scotland and the district to the south of it were no longer occupied after the reign of Commodus, and it is very probable that the stone wall which bestrides our island from Tyne to Solway now took the place of a *limes* of the earlier type (p. 182). It would seem, moreover, that we must assign to Severus or to his successor the strengthening of the barriers on the line from the Rhine to the Danube. In the eastern section a solid wall of stone, like that in Britain, stretched from Hienheim on the Danube to Lorch in Württemberg; from thence northwards an earthen bank and ditch, which runs immediately behind Hadrian's palisade, continues the barrier to the Rhine. The inherent

weakness of such immobile defences was only too soon revealed.

Severus, then, sustained a military autocracy by measures which doomed the military spirit to sure decay. As a civil ruler he showed something of the reforming spirit of Hadrian, though lacking his genius. Like Hadrian, he treated the Senate as a *quantité négligeable* and governed by means of the equestrian order. At the head of the Imperial service stood the prefect of the prætorians, whose powers were largely increased, especially in the sphere of jurisdiction. The prefect became the supreme criminal judge in Italy beyond the hundredth milestone[1] and the supreme court of appeal from the sentences of provincial governors. It thus became necessary to entrust the office to the first jurists of the day, and the last great exponents of classical Roman law, Papinian, Ulpian, and Paulus, held the prefecture of the guard under the dynasty of the Severi. Other functions, too, were assigned to the vicegerent of the Emperor. The *praefectus annonae* (p. 17), or chief commissioner for the food-supply of Rome, declines in importance, and is occupied merely with the distribution of corn amongst the populace, while the prefect of the guard is responsible for the conveyance of supplies from the provinces to the capital. It is probable that this was combined with a wider function, namely, that of provisioning the Imperial armies, for in the third century we find a centralised commissariat placed under his control. The career of Severus' first and only favourite may

[1] Within these limits the *praefectus urbi* had criminal jurisdiction.

serve to illustrate the importance of the prefect's office. C. Fulvius Plautianus, a fellow-countryman of the Emperor, gained the confidence of Severus during the wars of succession, and laid the foundations of a vast fortune when the estates of Niger's adherents were confiscated. He compassed the downfall of his colleague in the prefecture of the guard, Æmilius Saturninus, and henceforth enjoyed almost unlimited power, which he exercised with incredible avarice and cruelty. He received the insignia of the consulship, and in A.D. 202 became allied to the Imperial house by the marriage of his daughter, Fulvia Plautilla, with the Emperor's eldest son. In the following year he became consul as the colleague of Severus' younger son Geta, and his office was described as a *second* consulship, in order to show that the grant of the consular insignia to a knight was no whit inferior to the actual tenure of the chief magistracy by a senator. But the end was not far off. The Empress, Julia Domna, hated him, and, what was of more importance, her son, Antoninus, hated his daughter. Whether it be true or not that he conspired against the person of Severus, as he may well have done in self-defence, it was not difficult for Antoninus to convince his father that the man whose statues outnumbered those of the Emperor was too dangerous to live. He was put to death (January 22, A.D. 205) and his daughter exiled; and shortly afterwards the prefecture of the guard was put into commission. The military duties were performed by Mæcius Lætus, the hero of the siege of Nisibis, while the first lawyer of the time, Papinian,

exercised the prefect's jurisdiction, and left so deep an impress upon Roman law that his authority was placed above that of all other jurists in the age of the Codes.

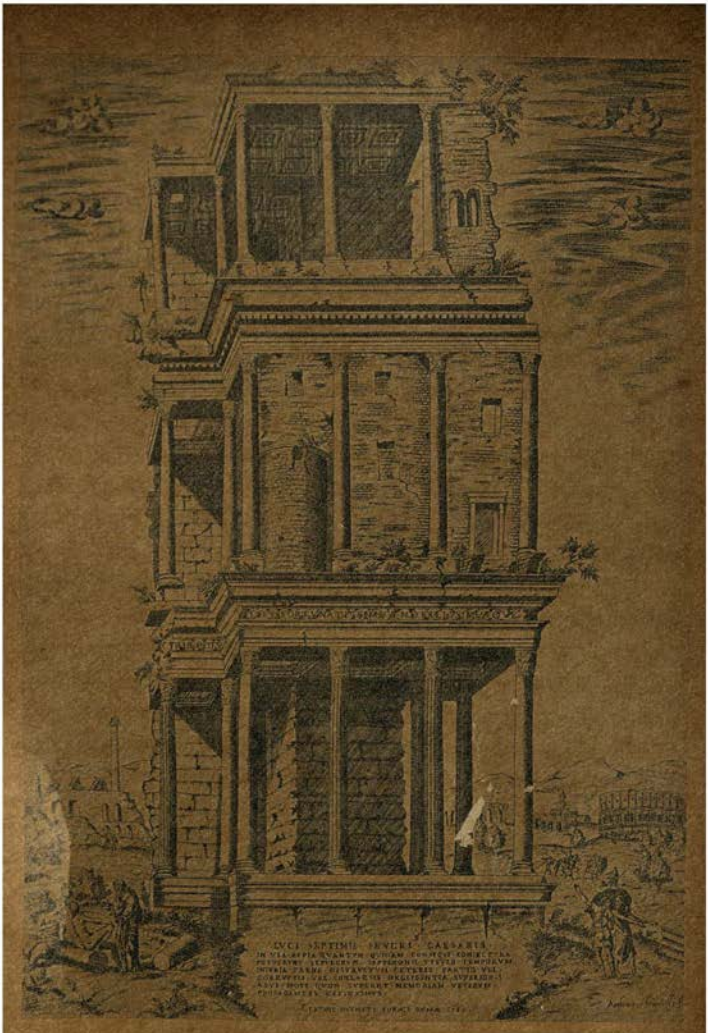
The changed position of the prætorian prefect is but one example of the increased authority given by Severus to equestrian officials. Bitterly as he hated the Senate, he could not at once deprive its members of the military commands which were their traditional prerogative; but the three "Parthian" legions of his creation were assigned to equestrian *praefecti*. Here Severus probably followed the analogy of the Egyptian garrison, which had always been subject to the orders of the prefect of Egypt; indeed, signs are not lacking that the administration of the kingdom of Egypt suggested to his practical intelligence many changes in the government of his Empire, now practically reduced to the same status of subjection. This was notably the case in the matter of finance. There were still in name two treasuries—the old *aerarium* of the Roman people, nominally controlled by the Senate, and the Imperial *fiscus*. Beside them there had grown up the "patrimony" of the Emperors, *i.e.*, a vast aggregate of domains extending throughout the Empire and administered by a special staff of agents (*procuratores*). These crown domains had lost the character of private property, and were now an inalienable inheritance transmitted with the principate. In Egypt, however, we find a further distinction between the "royal lands" (γῆ βασιλική), which belonged to the Emperors as the successors of the Ptolemies, and the "estates" (οὐσίαι)

whose revenues flowed into the "private exchequer" (ἴδιος λόγος). Severus applied this distinction to the finances of the Empire. The *aerarium* was treated as the municipal treasury of Rome, and lost, probably, a great part of its incomings; the *fiscus* absorbed the lion's share of the revenue even of the senatorial provinces, *e.g.*, those derived from public lands, and the "patrimony of Cæsar" became one of its branches;[1] while beside the *patrimonium* there came into existence a new estate, the "private property of the Emperor" (*res privata principis*). This was founded by means of the huge confiscations which followed the defeats of Niger and Albinus, and as Severus enacted that for the future all acquisitions made by the Emperors should be added thereto, it speedily dwarfed the old *patrimonium* into insignificance, and its chief administrator, the *procurator rei privatae*, with a salary of 300,000 sesterces (about £3,000), became the equal of the Emperor's Secretaries of State, and second only to the Minister of Finance, who is henceforward called no longer *procurator a rationibus*, but *rationalis*.

Severus, again, resembled Hadrian in his cosmopolitanism, but this did not mean that he desired to foster the growth of a new Græco-Roman nationality; it meant rather that he regarded all distinctions of race and privilege between the various subjects of his Empire as inconvenient anomalies. We have seen how the privileged position of Italy was infringed

[1] It seems probable that the accounts of the *patrimonium* soon ceased to be kept separately from those of the *fiscus*, and its special staff in Rome ceased to exist.

by the quartering of a legion at Albano: it may be added that this was a force recruited solely from barbarians, and that the new guard (p. 237) was of course thoroughly cosmopolitan. From the time of Trajan, again, the Emperors had borne the title *proconsul* when absent from Italy, and only then; Severus was so described even when in Rome. The grant of "Italian right" to many provincial cities—chiefly, as was natural, in the country of the Emperor's birth—helped on the levelling process. Rome herself, though she owed more, perhaps, to Severus in the matter of buildings than to any Emperor save Augustus, received these adornments, not as queen of the world, but as the mistress of its ruler. It has been acutely observed that from the reign of Severus onwards Rome is styled in official documents the "sacred city," and that the epithet must be interpreted by its use in a quasi-technical sense of Imperial properties. It is no accident that the marble plan of Rome whose fragments we possess —they formed the facing of a wall overlooking the Forum of Vespasian—dates from this period. At the south-east corner of the Palatine Hill rose the new palace built by Severus, partly founded upon that of Hadrian, partly raised on an immense artificial platform whose arcades still overhang the valley of the Circus Maximus. As the traveller from Africa approached it by the Appian Way, he beheld at its entrance the most striking monument of the superstition and vanity of his fellow-countryman—the Septizodium, or "House of the Seven Planets." We know that Severus was a firm believer in astrology—



RUINS OF THE SEPTIZODIUM OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

(From the "Speculum Romanae magnificentiae.")

it was said that he had married his Syrian wife because she possessed a "royal horoscope"—and this fact must in some way account for the building of the Septizodium, whose form, it has been said, was that of a "triple Trevi fountain." The last of its stately remains (p. 251) were destroyed by Sixtus V. in 1586.

We have every right, then, to consider the reign of Severus as marking an epoch in the development of absolutism. To speak of a dyarchy was now impossible. The senator could no longer propose a decree; he had become the member of an organised *claque* which greeted the Imperial messages with carefully regulated *acclamationes*, or formulæ of applause. He had no longer a voice in the allotment of magistracies and provinces, for all candidates were designated by the Emperor. His rank did not even shield his person from torture in cases of treason. The majesty of the Emperor was expressed by a series of bombastic titles which flattered the vanity of the African and recalled the turgid rhetoric of his countrymen. It had been an event of historic significance when the Senate conferred upon Trajan the style of *Optimus* (p. 156); now every inscription set up in honour of the reigning house bristled with superlatives.

While the founder of the new monarchy lived the Roman world enjoyed a measure of orderly and efficient government. But the vices of absolutism were quickly revealed after his death. Severus, as was said above, had married a lady of Emesa in Syria, Julia Domna. She was a woman of great force of character, and was noted for her patronage of art

and letters. Her intellectual interests were tinged with the prevailing superstition of the age, and she commissioned her *protégé*, the sophist Philostratus, to compose the mystical romance which purports to recount the life of the charlatan Apollonius of Tyana. Of her two sons the elder is known to history neither by his original name of Bassianus nor by that of M. Aurelius Antoninus bestowed upon him by his father (p. 241), but by the nickname Caracalla,[1] derived from a long Gallic cloak which he wore after a fashion devised by himself. He was born at Lyons in A.D. 186; and the historian Cassius Dio sums up the verdict of his contemporaries in the statement that he possessed all the vices and none of the virtues of three nations—the fickleness, cowardice, and braggadocio of the Gaul, the cruelty and savagery of the African, and the craft of the Syrian. Nothing that we know of him disposes us to call this judgment in question; and to crown all, his neurotic temperament and the excesses of his youth brought him in time to a condition bordering upon insanity. Of his younger brother, Geta, born in A.D. 189, we know less; but he seems to have had almost as many vices and less force of character. From early childhood the brothers hated each other. So long as their quarrels concerned merely their sports and pleasures small harm was done; but as they grew up their dissensions boded ill for the peace of the Empire. In A.D. 208 news was brought to Rome of inroads by the Caledonian tribes in Northern Britain,

[1] The form Caracallus is better attested, but has been ousted in common use by that found in a few passages of the *Historia Augusta*.

and Severus determined to take the field together with his sons, partly perhaps in order to remove them from the corrupting influences of the capital. We know little or nothing of the campaigns which he waged against the Caledonians. It seems that Geta, who became the third Augustus in A.D. 209, was left in command of the Romanised districts—for Britain had been divided into an Upper and Lower province in A.D. 197—whilst Severus and Antoninus carried the Roman arms into Scotland. Dio tells us that the *guerrilla* warfare which followed cost the Romans the lives of 50,000 men, but these figures must be hugely exaggerated. Nevertheless, though Severus assumed the title of *Britannicus Maximus* in A.D. 210, the island was not yet thoroughly pacified, and the Emperor's headquarters were still at York when he was attacked by gout and died at the age of sixty-eight, on February 4, A.D. 211. His last days were clouded with forebodings of evil, for Antoninus made it plain that he regarded the Empire as his prize; he endeavoured to gain the suffrages of the army, and even, if report be true, to hasten his father's end. Severus had been wont to say that it would have been well for the world had Marcus put Commodus to death; but he could not bring himself to apply the moral, and as he died entreated his sons to be at peace among themselves.

For a whole year the inevitable tragedy was delayed. The brothers returned at once to Rome and laid the ashes of their father in the mausoleum of the Antonine house. Severus was deified as a matter of course. Then the struggle for power began.

Rome was openly divided into two camps, which observed a kind of armed neutrality; the air was full of plots, and all the efforts of Julia Domna to reconcile her sons were fruitless. Geta was the more popular, for the tyrannical violence of Caracalla inspired terror in his subjects, and at length the elder brother resolved to be rid of his rival at all costs. Professing his readiness for a reconciliation, he persuaded Julia Domna to invite both her sons to visit her and settle their differences. No sooner was the summons obeyed than a body of centurions burst into the room, and Geta was cut down in his mother's arms (February, A.D. 212). Caracalla hastened to secure the allegiance of the household troops, professing that his own life had been endangered, and promising an enormous donative. In the prætorian camp his task was an easy one, but the legion at Albano was at first loyal to the memory of Geta, and closed its gates against his brother. The Senate was quieted by the proclamation of an amnesty to all exiled senators, and the name of Geta was erased from the public monuments. Then followed a reign of terror, in which (if we are to believe Dio) 20,000 of Geta's adherents perished. The tiger's thirst for blood was insatiable. Amongst his victims were his exiled wife, his cousin Septimius Afer, a daughter and grandson of Marcus Aurelius, and a son of Pertinax. The prætorian prefect Patruinus was cut down before the temple of Antoninus Pius. Papinian, who had been dismissed from his office on the death of Severus, was beheaded in the Emperor's presence. Fabius Cilo, who had

been tutor to the young princes and prefect of Rome under their father, was doomed to die because he had laboured to reconcile the brothers, and was hardly saved by his popularity with the urban cohorts which he had once commanded.

The year of Caracalla's great crime was made memorable by the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*—the edict which conferred Roman citizenship upon all freeborn members of the vast aggregate of communities which made up the Empire. It is possible that a few categories of persons, such as the barbarian *coloni* settled in the frontier provinces by Marcus (p. 228), may have been excluded from the grant of citizenship; but its effect was certainly to place the vast majority of the Emperor's subjects on a footing of equality. Even Egypt, for whose natives the acquisition of Roman rights had been hedged about with well-nigh unsurmountable barriers, furnished a senator to Rome before the close of the reign. The enemies of Caracalla declared that the object of the measure was purely financial. The chief direct tax was the 5 per cent. succession duty which was levied on the estates of Roman citizens only. It was, in fact, for them the equivalent of the land-tax which fell on such provincial communities as did not possess the "Italian right" (*ius Italicum*). By a stroke of the pen this tax was now laid upon almost all the estates which passed from owner to owner throughout the Empire.[1] It may be that this motive played its part

[1] It was now raised from 5 to 10 per cent., as was also the tax on the manumission of slaves (*vicesima libertatis*).

in suggesting the enfranchisement of the provincials; but it must not be forgotten that the act of Caracalla was but the logical outcome of the levelling policy of Severus and helped to realise the ideal of the great jurists. Their labours tended to obliterate the manifold distinctions which rendered men unequal before the law in virtue of their origin or condition; they were building up a system of uniform municipal law, and a great measure of simplification could not be otherwise than welcome to them. To the Emperor, perhaps, it seemed that where all were alike subject to his unlimited authority, differences of condition were superfluous. By a natural corollary of the doctrine, the right of criminal jurisdiction over Roman citizens was given to all governors of provinces, of whatever rank, and appeal to Rome was only allowed in a limited number of cases.

The sole reign of Caracalla lasted for some five years. True to the maxims of his father, he ruled by means of the army, upon which his favours were unsparingly bestowed. It had been the custom for certain corps to add to their titles the name of an Emperor to whom they had rendered special services; apparently the tie which bound the three "Parthian" legions to Severus had thus found expression. Now every body of Roman troops—legions, *auxilia*, and prætorian cohorts—bore the name of *Antoniniani*; and the practice was continued under succeeding Emperors.

Caracalla saw in Alexander the Great his ideal, and would fain have rivalled his fame as a soldier. In A.D. 213 he was summoned to the Northern

frontier by the news that a confederation of German tribes, the Alamanni, had broken through the Rætian *limes*. It was the beginning of the great westward movement of the Germanic peoples before which Rome herself was one day to fall; but for the moment Caracalla was victorious, both on the Danube and afterwards on the Main, and assumed the style of *Germanicus Maximus*. His enemies, indeed, asserted that his victories—nay, even his safe return from the war—were due, not to the sword, but to the power of gold; but this can scarcely be true, for twenty years of peace followed his campaign.

In A.D. 214 Caracalla passed a few months in Rome before setting out for the East, whence he was never to return. He did not see the completion of the great baths whose remains, though stripped of their dazzling robes of marble and mosaic, still preserve something of their ancient grandeur. The call of the blood and the memories of the Macedonian conqueror drew him Eastwards. He spent a few months in the inspection of the Danube garrisons, and then turned towards Greek lands. Here, in the words of Herodian, "he forthwith became Alexander." He sought to imitate his hero in dress and deportment. He formed a phalanx of 16,000 Macedonians, equipped after the fashion of Alexander's army. He strove manfully to live a soldier's life and perform all a soldier's duties, though his health was weak and he was forced to seek for healing from Asklepios in his famous temple at Pergamon. After a winter spent at Nicomedia, in Bithynia, he transferred his head-quarters to Antioch in A.D. 215, carrying in his train

REMAINS OF THE GATE OF CARTHAGE

a crowd of unfortunate senators, one of whom, Cassius Dio, poured into the closing books of his history all the venom engendered during the years of terror. Dio was a Bithynian by origin, imbued with the superstitions of his time, and had won the favour of Severus by means of a pamphlet in which the omens which foretold his rise to power were interpreted as tokens of the will of heaven, heralding the advent of a new Augustus. Bitter as was the disillusion caused by Severus' despotic rule, it was enhanced tenfold by the tyranny of Caracalla. Dio admits that the Emperor had a quick wit and a ready tongue, but he allows him no other merit, voicing herein the unmixed hatred of the Senate for a ruler who trampled it under his heel with brutal contempt. Like his father, Caracalla took his ministers from the equestrian order. His cousins, Soæmias and Mammæa, the daughters of his mother's sister, Mæsa, were married to two members of this order, Sextus Varius Marcellus and Gessius Marcianus, and the first named seems for a time to have ruled as Caracalla's vicegerent in Rome, acting at once as representative of the prætorian prefect and the prefect of the city (*vice praefecti praetorio et praefecti urbi*). This was an unprecedented cumulation of offices, for the former was the crown of the equestrian, the latter of the senatorial career. Meanwhile the Emperor was planning a scheme of Eastern conquest and making his name a byword for perfidy and cruelty. In A.D. 215 he visited Egypt, and as the citizens of Alexandria failed to pay due honour to the degenerate youth who aped their founder, he

caused many thousands of them to be indiscriminately massacred by his soldiers. In the following year he treacherously seized and imprisoned the king of Armenia, as well as his own vassal, Abgar IX. of Edessa, whose father, deposed two years before, had embraced the Christian faith. Edessa now became the Emperor's headquarters, and the Parthian war was about to begin in earnest, when the inevitable blow fell.

The command of the guards was at this time shared by Oclatinius Adventus, an elderly soldier totally devoid of culture who had risen from the ranks, and Marcus Opellius Macrinus, an African of humble origin whose talent for affairs had brought him to the notice of Plautianus. After his master's fall he was taken into the Imperial service, became administrator of the private domains of the crown, and at length succeeded Papinian as prætorian prefect. Early in A.D. 217 the viceroy of Rome, Flavius Maternianus,[1] was informed by an astrologer that danger threatened the Emperor from Macrinus and his son Diadumenianus. He immediately despatched a letter of warning to the East, but by some means Macrinus became aware of its contents—whether it be that he received the news through a friend in Rome, or, as the more dramatic version runs, that Caracalla himself handed the missive unopened to his minister while witnessing a chariot race. Macrinus had now no choice but to fulfil the destiny which the stars foretold, and suborned a private soldier to

[1] He probably succeeded Varius Marcellus and exercised his authority under the same conditions.

assassinate the Emperor. The opportunity came when Caracalla was visiting the temple of the Moon at Carrhæ, and the fatal blow was struck (April 8, A.D. 217). The assassin was immediately killed by the German bodyguards, and Macrinus was able to conceal his share in the deed until the choice of the army had made him Emperor.

The elevation of Macrinus to the principate marked the beginning of a new epoch. He was the first Emperor who was not of senatorial rank, and his rule foreshadowed that of the "barrack Emperors," who owed their position solely to the favour of the army. Under the rule of such chance favourites of fortune, guided by no dynastic or administrative traditions and holding their precarious dignity by a tenure like that of the priest

> who slew the slayer,
> And shall himself be slain,

the Empire was in the space of forty years dismembered and all but destroyed. Macrinus himself, though free from conspicuous vices, was not born to rule. In the outburst of relief and joy which followed the death of the hated tyrant he was recognised as Emperor without hesitation by Rome and the provinces. He endeavoured to attach himself to the fallen dynasty, assuming the name of Severus, and conferring that of Antoninus upon his son,[1] and at the same time to secure the support of the Senate by granting an amnesty to political exiles. He likewise

[1] He even went so far as to insist on the deification of Caracalla under the name of "Antoninus the Great."

remitted the increased fiscal burdens imposed on the Empire by Caracalla.

It was all in vain. There was no real restoration of privileges to the Senate, which was offended by Macrinus' assumption of the full Imperial titles and dignities without awaiting the customary decree, and by the appointment of Adventus to the prefecture of Rome. Above all, the army was dissatisfied. Macrinus was no general. He was obliged to take the field against the Parthian king, Vologases, who had invaded Mesopotamia, but met with no decisive success—according to some accounts he was badly beaten—and concluded an inglorious peace, which entailed the surrender of all his prisoners and the payment of a heavy indemnity. Armenia, too, passed out of his control, though the son of the king deposed by Caracalla acknowledged in name the suzerainty of Rome. However, the restoration of peace on the Eastern frontier might have been worth the price which was paid for it had it been followed by the retrenchment of military expenditure and the establishment of a stricter discipline. But Macrinus was not the man to carry through these reforms. He did, indeed, announce that while the vested rights of Caracalla's troops would be respected, fresh enlistments would take place on the terms fixed by Severus. But he neglected to disperse the large force assembled in the East, and the mistake was fatal, for discontent at once began to spread amongst the less-favoured recruits, whilst the veteran troops despised their unwarlike commander. The irony of fate transferred their allegiance to a ruler in

comparison with whom Macrinus was a very Trajan.

Shortly after the murder of Caracalla his mother, Julia Domna, had died at Antioch, whether by her own hand or of the mortal disease from which she had long suffered, aggravated by the wreck of her ambition. Her sister, Julia Mæsa, was permitted to retire to Emesa (Homs), the home of the family, whose members enjoyed a hereditary title to the priesthood of Elagabalus. Under this name—the "God of the Mountain"—the Emesenes worshipped their local Ba'al, incarnate, like so many of the Syrian Ba'alîm, in a black stone of conical shape. Each of the daughters of Julia Mæsa, of whom mention has already been made (p. 260), had one son, and the elder of the two, now in his fourteenth year, was the chief priest of Elagabalus. In the gorgeous temple of the Unconquered Sun-god, which rose high above the walls and towers of Emesa, he practised the rites of the fetish to the sound of the drum and the tambourine, dressed in flowing robes of gold-embroidered purple and bedizened with jewellery from head to foot. Handsome, effeminate, and profoundly vicious, this creature of perverted instincts, scarce worthy the name of man, was called by the accident of his birth to the throne of the Cæsars. The malcontent officers conspired with the women and eunuchs who surrounded the boy-priest; it was asserted that he was the natural son of Caracalla, and thus the legitimate representative of the dynasty; and at length, on May 16, A.D. 218, he was proclaimed Emperor at Emesa.

and the great name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus suffered its last and worst profanation. The only force at his disposal was a legion quartered in the neighbourhood of Emesa; but a cavalry force despatched by Macrinus under the command of his prætorian prefect, Ulpius Julianus, deserted to the pretender and murdered its officers, and disaffection soon began to show itself in many quarters. Macrinus endeavoured to regain the favour of the army by restoring the privileges which he had curtailed, conferred the title of Augustus upon his son Diadumenianus, and lavished an enormous donative upon the soldiers; but it was all too late. The second Parthian legion, which had followed Caracalla to the East and was quartered at Apamea, refused to obey Macrinus' orders, and he was forced to return in haste to Antioch, which was threatened by the advancing troops of Antoninus. A single engagement sufficed to decide the issue (June 8, A.D. 218). About twenty miles from Antioch the rival forces met, and Macrinus fled from the battlefield whilst the result was still in doubt. Leaving Antioch to its fate, he made for Europe as fast as the Imperial post-horses could carry him, but was arrested at Chalcedon and given up to his pursuers; shortly afterwards he was put to death by Antoninus' orders, and a like fate befel Diadumenianus, who endeavoured to cross the Euphrates and seek safety in Parthia.

Elagabalus—for so he was called by his contemporaries, in accordance with the practice of many Oriental cults, in which the priest was identified with

the god—was now recognised as Emperor without dispute; but he made no haste to establish himself in the capital, and passed the winter of A.D. 218–19 at Nicomedia, in Bithynia. In the following spring he made his entry into Rome. A century before the greatest of Roman satirists had given utterance to the complaint that the waters of the Syrian Orontes had mingled with those of the Tiber; but even Juvenal might have failed to find words adequate to express the feelings of the Romans when they beheld their Emperor, whose painted cheeks and darkened eyes proclaimed only too clearly his unspeakable degradation, walking backwards in mute adoration of the shapeless fetish which had supplanted Jupiter the Best and Greatest as the supreme divinity of Rome. "Priest of the Unconquered Sun-god Elagabalus" now headed the list of Imperial titles, and the Black Stone of Emesa, housed in a sumptuous temple on the Palatine, was surrounded by the sacred symbols of the ancient Roman religion. The Palladium itself was removed from the custody of the Vestals, and, having been gilded, was solemnly given in marriage to the new divinity!

Elagabalus was not merely a superstitious fanatic; he was cruel, extravagant, and utterly depraved, and his short reign was from beginning to end an orgy without parallel in the history of Rome. The eunuch Gannys, who had woven the threads of the conspiracy which raised his master to the throne, and had actually commanded his troops in the battle with Macrinus, was soon put to death by his ungrateful master, and the chief minister of state was

(From a photograph supplied by Professor Strudniczka.

THE BLACK STONE OF ELAGABALUS.

(From a figured capital found in the Roman Forum.)

The conical object guarded by an eagle is the black stone.

a certain P. Valerius Comazon, once an actor, now prefect of the prætorians, who held the consulship as the Emperor's colleague and acted more than once as prefect of Rome. A charioteer, Gordius, became prefect of the watch, a hairdresser prefect of the corn supply, and the Emperor's time was spent in the company of the most degraded of mankind.

It was impossible that such a state of affairs should continue; and the Emperor's grandmother, Julia Mæsa, who aspired to hold the reins of government and was permitted to take an official part in the deliberations of the Senate, induced Elagabalus to adopt his cousin, under the name of Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, and confer upon him the rank of Cæsar (July 10, A.D. 221). Alexander, who was now thirteen years old, had been carefully brought up by his mother, Julia Mammæa, and had taken no part in the excesses of Elagabalus. He soon gained popularity with the troops, and the Emperor, taking alarm, endeavoured to rescind his adoption, and even conspired against his life; but the guards took him under their protection, forced Elagabalus to make him co-regent, and finally, on March 11, A.D. 222, murdered the boy-priest, together with his mother, his ministers, and his minions. Alexander thus became sole Emperor.

For the ten years which followed the fall of Elagabalus the Roman world enjoyed a brief respite from the evils of war and tyranny. Alexander was an amiable and virtuous youth, and if not a great, at

least a conscientious ruler. It is hard, indeed, to determine what part is to be assigned to him in the policy of his reign, for, in the first place, he was subject throughout to the influence of his mother, who exercised the powers of a regent after the death of Julia Mæsa, and, further, an attempt was made to restore to the Senate something of its ancient powers. It was, of course, impossible to replace under senatorial control the vast and complicated machinery whose working lay in the skilled hands of the Imperial bureaucracy, but Alexander was determined, if possible, to free himself from the meshes of departmental red-tape. We are told that he frequently changed his ministers of finance (*rationales*), and spoke of them as a "necessary evil." It was laid down that the prætorian prefecture should carry with it senatorial rank, so that the chief adviser of the Emperor should, if not by origin, at least by virtue of his office, belong to the first order in the social hierarchy. An Imperial cabinet was called into being, consisting of sixteen senators, which was perhaps only destined to assist Mæsa in the exercise of the regency during Alexander's minority: and we also hear of a larger body of seventy, including twenty expert jurists, to whom legislative projects were submitted. Moreover, Alexander adhered to the rule by which, when a senator was on trial, his peers alone were summoned to form the *consilium* of assessors who sat with the Emperor. If we are to believe the statements of his biographer, he went so far as to submit for the approval of the Senate the names of the officials selected for provincial gover-

norships and even procuratorial posts. It is true that the tribunate and ædileship were abolished, or at any rate ceased to form alternative steps in the *cursus honorum* of the senator, but they had long ceased to be of any practical importance, and a fresh senatorial dignity was created by the appointment of fourteen consulars as colleagues of the *praefectus urbi* in the administration of the fourteen "regions" of Rome.

These reforms, it must be said, did not pass without a protest from the officialdom whose supremacy was threatened. The evidence of this fact is drawn, not from the biography of Alexander inserted in the *Historia Augusta*, which is little more than the panegyric of an ideal prince, nor from the narratives of contemporary writers, but from an imaginary dialogue between Augustus and his advisers, Agrippa and Mæcenas, composed by Cassius Dio to adorn the pages of his history. Agrippa advocates the restoration of the Republic with a series of rhetorical commonplaces, but he serves only as a foil to Mæcenas, whose speech gives a summary analysis, not of the principate of Augustus, but of the developed Imperial constitution of the third century, at least in its main outlines, although a few traits in the picture are due to Dio himself. Reading between the lines, we can see that the writer sets his face firmly against reactionary tendencies. He desires due honour to be paid to the Senate, but he would suffer it to have no voice in the appointment of officials; he insists that the Republican magistracies, while retaining their character as honorific distinctions, should be treated

as merely municipal in their functions; and he presses for the assimilation of Italy with the provinces in the matter of administration. Even the change made by Alexander in the *cursus honorum* (p. 270) is disapproved by implication. Yet Cassius Dio had been honoured by holding the consulship in A.D. 229 with the Emperor as his colleague. The truth was that this honour had been fraught with grave danger to Dio. He had made himself unpopular with the army by his maintenance of discipline, and to do this was to court destruction. On the accession of Alexander the great jurist Ulpian was raised to the prefecture of the guards, and for some years exercised a salutary influence on the government as chief minister of state; but the unruly prætorians chafed under his strong hand, and at length murdered him in the Emperor's presence. The governor of Mesopotamia, Flavius Heracleo, likewise fell a victim to his mutinous troops, and Alexander, who felt himself powerless to protect an unpopular commander, advised Dio to absent himself from Rome during his tenure of the consulate. But the historian—such is his version of the story—thought it more consistent with his dignity to show himself for a few days in the capital, whence he retired to his estate in Bithynia, and quitted the making of history for the safer task of writing it. Small wonder that he—and doubtless many another faithful public servant—felt that a strong central government was needed to control the disruptive forces of a barbaric soldiery.

The ten years of peace with which the reign

opened brought many useful reforms and witnessed some steps in the gradual transformation of ancient society which marks the third century A.D. Briefly, we may describe this, borrowing the language of a great English jurist, as the substitution of a *régime* of status for a *régime* of contract. In the Republican period the right of association had been abused for political ends, and one of the first measures taken in self-defence by the monarchy was to place restrictions upon the formation of *collegia*, *i.e.*, private societies of all kinds, including trade-guilds, a licence from the government being required in every instance. Now the performance of public services was in large measure left by the Romans to private enterprise, stimulated, if need be, by the concession of privileges. Here the *collegia* found their opportunity. It became the custom, for example, for the guild formed by the members of the building trades to undertake the duties of a fire-brigade in Roman towns; this *collegium fabrorum* then secured for its active members certain immunities—the Latin word *immunitas* means not so much exemption from taxation as freedom from *munera*, or public duties—and the theory devised by the jurists was that the members of the *collegium* were engaged in the performance of a special *munus*. The great extension of this system was due to the fact that the government assumed responsibility for the provision of an adequate food-supply; hence the formation of guilds such as those of the bakers, and the grant of privileges to corn merchants and shippers in the provinces, who were in time likewise incorporated by Imperial charter, at

least as early as the reign of Antoninus Pius. But the enjoyment of state-aid naturally entailed submission to state-control; and the despotic government of the full-blown bureaucracy converted this control into inexorable compulsion. We know so little of the details of Roman history in the third century that we are unable to assign precise dates to the several steps in this process; but we do know that the change took place between the reign of Septimius Severus, when the jurists still lay stress on the "immunities" enjoyed by members of the guilds, and that of Constantine, whose laws (preserved in the Theodosian Code) reveal the *collegia* as close corporations burdened with onerous duties, the membership of which is strictly hereditary. Now there is a passage in the biography of Severus Alexander which seems to show that a great step in advance was taken during his reign. He still, it is true, pursued the old policy of stimulating enterprise by bounties; but he also, we are told, incorporated "all industries (*artes*) whatsoever" in guilds, and regulated their status in the eye of the law. It is not without significance that the formula "*quibus ex S.C. coire licet*" ("licensed by decree of the Senate") disappears about this time from the inscriptions: private initiative has ceased to be the motive force in the formation of *collegia*. This action of the government, moreover, was in harmony with the tendency of the age. The *coloni*, or cultivators of the soil, were being reduced to a condition bordering on serfdom; it is hard to determine how far this was due to economic pressure exerted by the owners of large estates and

how far to the action of the Imperial government, which was the greatest landlord of all. There was also the analogy of the semi-servile barbarian *coloni* bound to military service whom Marcus had planted in the Danube provinces; and Alexander took a further step in the same direction when he created the class of *limitanei*, or military colonists settled on the frontiers. Septimius Severus had turned his half-domesticated soldiery into wielders of the ploughshare as well as of the sword, parcelling out the lands adjoining the great camps into allotments for their use[1]; Alexander made grants of land to be held on the condition of *hereditary* service in the army, and subject to forfeiture if this were violated. Thus on all hands the signs were manifest that the dynamic forces of ancient society were well-nigh spent, and that the movement which had created the city-state and the world-empire would seek its term in the artificial equilibrium of caste.

There are few events to chronicle in the earlier years of Severus Alexander. We hear tales of trouble in his family. It is said that Mammæa grew jealous of her daughter-in-law, Sallustia Barbia Orbiana, whose father, Sallustius Macrinus, seems to have been raised by Alexander to the rank of Cæsar, and that Macrinus was forced in self-defence to attempt a *pronunciamiento*, the failure of which spelt ruin to himself and the Empress. But, except for this tragic episode and the mutinies mentioned above, the stream of history flowed smoothly.

Meantime the storm-clouds were gathering in the

[1] He seems to have found this practice already in existence in Egypt.

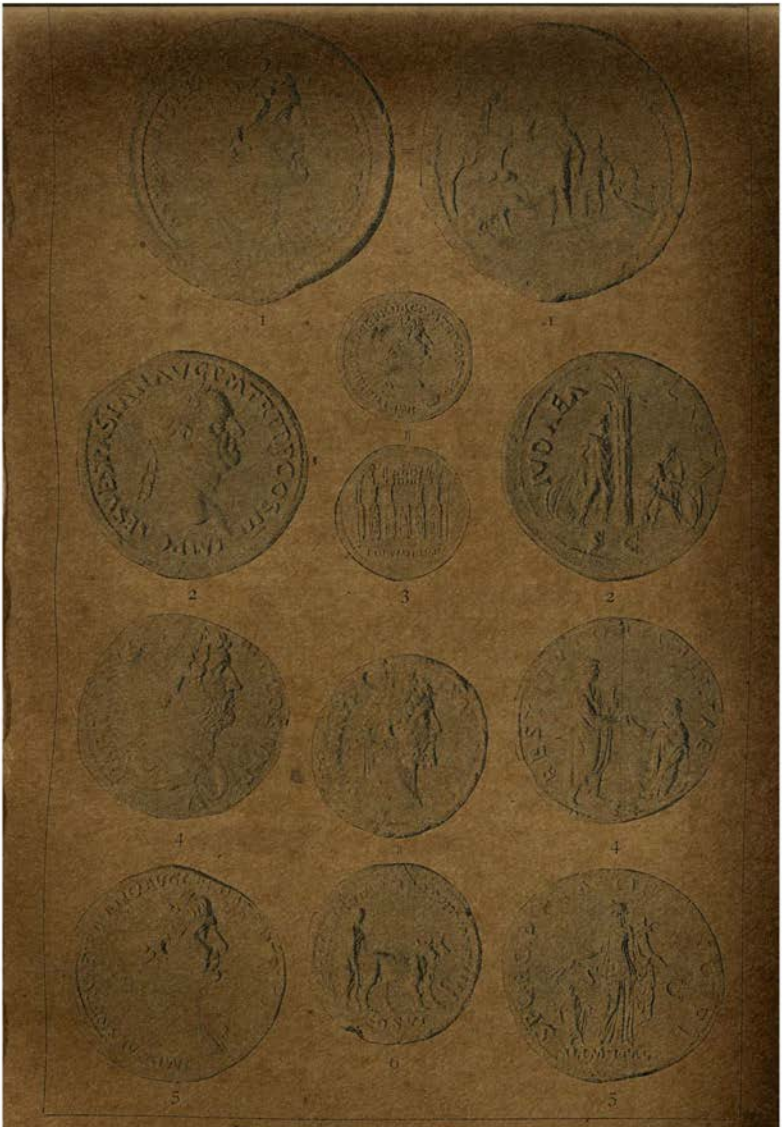
East, where the Arsacid kingdom of Parthia had come to an inglorious end. Amongst the vassals who owed allegiance to the rulers of Ctesiphon were the princes of Persepolis, the ancient home of the Achæmenids, whose claims to the Empire of Darius, shadowy as they were in respect of legitimate descent, might yet be asserted with effect if the occasion arose. For some time past the control of the Arsacids over the dependent principalities had been growing weaker; the invasion of Severus had dealt a severe blow to their prestige, and at last Parthia's extremity proved the Persian's opportunity. An ambitious prince, Ardashir (Artaxerxes), the son of Papak, who had carved out a kingdom for himself by subduing his neighbours from the Persian Gulf to Ispahan, rebelled against his suzerain, Artabanus V., proclaiming himself as the restorer at once of the Achæmenid Empire and the pure Zoroastrian faith, invaded Parthia, and by a decisive victory gained on April 28, A.D. 227, wrested from his adversary the title of "King of Kings" (*Shahan Shah*). For three years Ardashir was busy with the consolidation of his Empire and the subjugation of Media and Armenia; then, in A.D. 230, Rome learned that the successor of Darius laid claim to the whole of the territories ruled by his reputed ancestor, as far as the shores of the Ægean.[1] He crossed the Euphrates, overran Roman

[1] Rome always claimed, and sometimes successfully asserted (as in the case of Tiridates, p. 78) a certain ill-defined suzerainty over the Arsacids: the Sassanids (so the new dynasty was named) always treated the Empire *de puissance en puissance*. As Mommsen acutely remarks, they asserted their equality by issuing a *gold* coinage, whereas the Parthian kings had struck silver only.

Mesopotamia, and besieged Nisibis, whilst swarms of mailed horsemen scoured Cappadocia and Syria. Alexander was forced to take up the gage which had been offered to the Persian by his mightier namesake.

In A.D. 231 the Emperor and his mother left Rome for the East, and spent the following winter at Antioch. The army of the Euphrates was heavily reinforced from the Danube garrisons, and in the spring of A.D. 232 three columns took the offensive. Alexander himself commanded the centre, which operated from Palmyra as its base; the left was ordered to march into Armenia, where the Arsacids and their adherents still kept up an obstinate resistance to Ardashir, and thence to invade Media; while the right was to advance south-eastward and turn the left flank of the enemy. It is hard to ascertain from our meagre and untrustworthy sources what was the course of the campaign which followed; according to one account, the Roman right wing was cut to pieces, the centre suffered severe loss from plague, and the left endured terrible hardships during its retreat through the highlands of Armenia in the winter of A.D. 232–3; nevertheless, Alexander celebrated a brilliant triumph on his return to Rome in September, A.D. 233; and it is beyond question that not only was the menace of the new Persian Empire to the security of Western Asia brushed aside, but Roman Mesopotamia was recovered. The truce, as we shall see, was of brief duration.

Alexander had not long returned to the capital when a new danger threatened the Empire, this time



HISTORICAL COINS—VESPASIAN TO COMMODUS.

1. Medallion of Antoninus Pius with landing of Æneas (*ante*, p. 201).
2. Coin of Vespasian with IVDAEA CAPTA.
3. Coin of Trajan with FORVM TRAIANI.
4. Coin of Hadrian with RESTITVTOR GALLIAE.
5. Coin of Trajan with ADLOCVTIO ITALICA (*ante*, p. 150).
6. Coin of Commodus with COLonia Lucia Antoniniana COMmodiana (*ante*, Rome, p. 38).

from the North. It was probably in part due to the withdrawal of the Danube legions for the Eastern campaign that the German tribes took courage to attack the *limes*, which offered an ineffectual resistance to their assault. The Emperor was summoned to the Rhine in A.D. 234, and fixed his headquarters at Mainz. A pontoon bridge was thrown across the river and a large force assembled, including a formidable contingent of Mesopotamian archers; but Alexander was no warrior and made overtures of peace to the enemy, whose retreat he was prepared to purchase with hard cash. The mistake was fatal; for the army, which had long despised its Emperor and chafed under the rule of his mother, determined to make an end of the degenerate house of Severus and to choose a ruler from themselves. They found the man they needed in C. Julius Verus Maximinus, a Thracian peasant, who owed his advancement from the ranks to his colossal bodily strength, and his success as an officer to his soldierly qualities. In March, A.D. 235, he was saluted as Emperor by the legions of the Rhine, and before the close of the month Alexander and his mother had been done to death at Mainz.

VIII

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE

WITH the elevation of Maximinus the Thracian to the principate the darkest days of Rome began. He was the first of the Emperors who rose from the ranks to the throne without holding a single administrative post and who represented nothing but the tyranny of a brutal and licentious soldiery. The weakness of the foundation upon which the mild and beneficent rule of the last of the Severi had been raised was suddenly revealed, and the shock was terrible. It is true that the security of the Empire was threatened by the inroads of barbarians, and that the strong arm of a military leader was needed to beat them off. In this respect Maximinus rendered signal services to the cause of Rome. The invading Germans were hurled back into their forests, and the *limes* was restored as the first line of defence. From the Rhine the Emperor marched to the Danube, and earned the titles of *Sarmaticus Maximus* and *Dacicus Maximus* by his victories. Indeed, during the three years of his reign he never set foot in Rome, or even in the Italian

peninsula. But immunity from the ravages of the barbarian invader was dearly purchased when Rome and the provinces were ground beneath the heel of a tyrant who was absolutely devoid of pity for the weak or reverence for the ancient. We may perhaps distrust the tales of his fiendish cruelty handed down by senatorial tradition, but we find that even in the ranks of the army conspiracies against his life soon sprang up. The archers of Osrhoene, in Mesopotamia, who had followed in the train of Severus Alexander from the Euphrates to the Rhine, put forward their own candidate for the purple, but their revolt was speedily suppressed, and we find the name of the corps erased in inscriptions. A consular named Magnus formed a military plot, whose object was to destroy the bridge by which Maximinus had crossed the Rhine and leave him at the mercy of the Germans, but this too was betrayed. From every quarter of the Empire the vast sums which were needed to content the soldiery were wrung by exorbitant taxation and judicial murder; the funds destined for public amusements were diverted to the military treasury, and soon the smouldering hatred of the subjects of Maximinus needed but a spark to burst into flame.

The first outbreak took place[1] in Africa, where the vast wealth of the province, concentrated in the hands of a small number of great landowners, was mercilessly exploited by the agents of the treasury. The holders of two large estates at Thysdrus (El-

[1] In February, A.D. 238.

Djemm) were singled out as victims by the Imperial procurator, and preferred the hazard of rebellion to the certainty of ruin. They called out their tenants, who sufficed in themselves to form a small army, marched on Carthage, and assassinated the procurator. No choice now remained but to set up a rival to Maximinus, and the proconsul of Africa, M. Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus Africanus, was forced by the rebels to assume the purple, together with his son, who, although of consular rank, was attached to his father's staff as *legatus*. The Gordians belonged to the highest aristocracy of Rome. They are said to have numbered amongst their ancestors, direct or collateral, the Gracchi, Mark Antony, and Trajan, and were distinguished both for wealth and culture. The father was eighty years of age. He had grown to manhood under the rule of Marcus Aurelius, and had been noted for the magnificence of his public entertainments as well as for his literary tastes.[1] His son, already middle-aged, who had been the colleague of Severus Alexander in the consulship, bore the reputation of an accomplished man of pleasure.

The Gordians lost no time in announcing their *coup d'état* to the Senate and seeking recognition at its hands, and this was speedily granted, for nothing could be more acceptable to that body than the accession of an Emperor attached by birth and tradition to the senatorial order. Gordian procured the assassination by treachery of Vitalian,

[1] He was the friend and patron of Philostratus, whose "Lives of the Sophists" are dedicated to him.

the prætorian prefect of Maximinus, and the report flew throughout Rome that the hated Emperor was dead. There was a wild outburst of enthusiasm and an indiscriminate massacre of all those who were believed to favour the cause of Maximinus, but the real trial of strength was yet to come. The first blood was drawn by the supporters of the existing *régime*. Since the time of Caligula the proconsul of Africa had ceased to command the Third Legion, which furnished the regular garrison of the African provinces, and its commander, the *legatus* of Numidia, Capellianus by name, was an avowed adherent of Maximinus. The Gordians determined to deprive him of his command; his reply was to march against Carthage at the head of his legion. The untrained levies of the peaceful province were no match for the legionaries, and were at once scattered to the winds. The younger Gordian fell in battle, the elder died by his own hand, and the cause of Maximinus was for the moment victorious.

But the Senate was by now too deeply committed to draw back, and gathered all its strength for a final effort to shake off the yoke of military despotism. It is probable that the senators could appeal to a genuine sentiment in Italy, still smarting under the loss of those exclusive privileges which had once distinguished it from the provinces; but this was of small avail against the might of the legions. There were better grounds for hope in the unpopularity of Maximinus, whose power rested solely on the swords of his army. An appeal was made, and not, as it would seem, in vain, to the provincial governors;

Maximinus was declared a public enemy and his acts annulled, and a commission of twenty senators was appointed,[1] whose primary duty was to levy troops for the defence of Italy, divided for this purpose into twenty military districts. It was doubtless also intended that the commissioners should form an Imperial Privy Council, for a restoration of the Republic was out of the question, and the Senate could do no more than preserve the old principle of collegiality, hallowed by four centuries and a half of consular government, by nominating two of its members as joint depositaries of the powers of the principate. The choice of the senators fell on M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus, who, though not of distinguished ancestry,[2] had achieved success as a military commander, and might hope to secure the allegiance of the Rhine army, which he had led to victory against the Germans, and D. Cælius Calvinus Balbinus, who owed to the advantages of birth and wealth rather than to his own talents a long record of important official posts and the honour of holding a second consulship at an unusually early age as the colleague of Caracalla. No distinction was made between the honours granted to the two Augusti—even the chief pontificate, hitherto held by one Emperor only, was conferred on both—but it was understood that the government of Rome would rest with Balbinus,

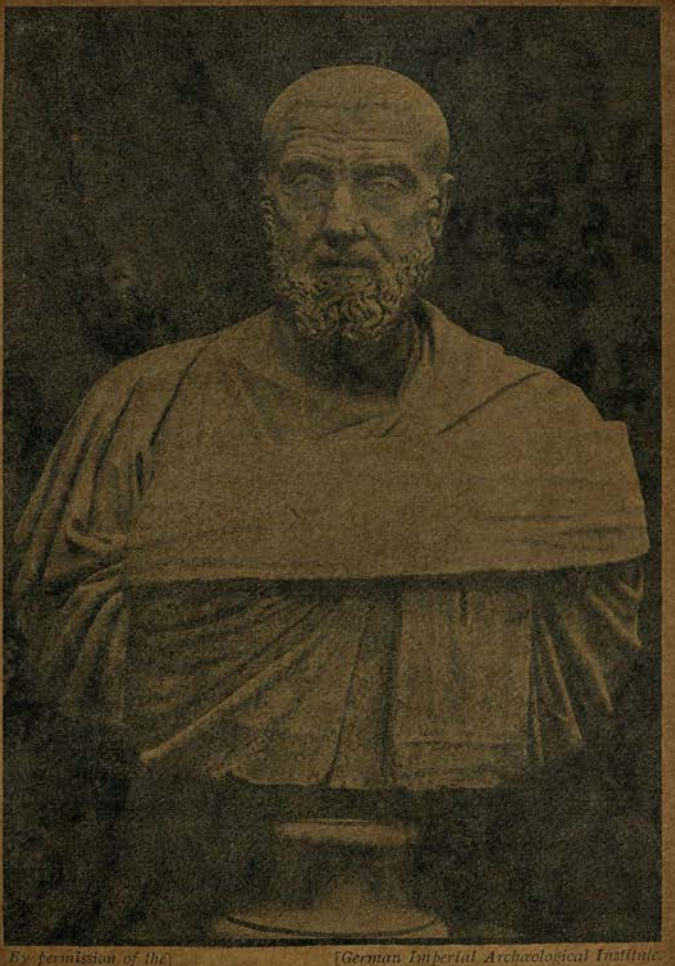
[1] Their official title was *XX viri ex S(enatus) C(onsulto) rei publicae curandae.*

[2] He was, it is true, a patrician, but in all probability owed that rank to the creation of Septimius Severus.

whilst Pupienus would take the field against Maximinus.

The Senate soon learnt that its authority was insecurely based. Scenes of disorder and bloodshed were enacted in the capital. The populace demanded that the grandson of the elder Gordian, a boy fourteen years old, should be associated as Cæsar with the two Augusti. The Senate was forced to consent to this step, but the rioting continued. Sabinus, the city prefect, was murdered, and the detachment of the guards which remained in Rome was besieged in the prætorian camp. Balbinus was powerless to assert his authority, and a *sortie* by the prætorians led to desperate street-fighting and a conflagration which destroyed a large portion of the city.

The issue of the struggle with Maximinus was soon decided. At the first news of the revolt he took steps to secure the passes of the Eastern Alps, and set out without a moment's delay for Italy, which he threatened to lay waste with fire and sword. Pupienus fixed his base of operations at Ravenna, from whence the Adriatic fleet, which had declared for the Senate, kept communications open with the fortress of Aquileia. Italy responded with the enthusiasm of despair to the call for recruits, and the Rhine army sent detachments to the aid of its old commander. The provinces generally remained passive spectators of the impending duel. As the army of the Danube advanced the terrified population fled before it. Maximinus found the town of Emona (the modern Laybach) deserted by its inhabit-



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PUPIENUS.

(*Vatican.*)

ants, and pressed on to Aquileia, which closed its gates against him and prepared for a desperate resistance. The besiegers were ill provisioned, and their attacks were repulsed time after time. Maximinus vented his wrath upon his officers, and destroyed the last shreds of his popularity with his army. At length the soldiers of the second Parthian legion, fearing for the security of their wives and children, who were detained in the cantonments at Albano, attacked Maximinus in his tent and murdered him together with his son Maximus, upon whom he had conferred the rank of Cæsar.[1] Italy was saved, and there were wild scenes of rejoicing in Rome when the heads of Maximinus and his son were laid before the Senate as tokens of victory. Pupienus hastened to Aquileia and received the submission of Maximinus' army; thence he returned to Rome with his German guard, and the Senate's last experiment in constitutional government began. It was destined to be of short duration.

The two Emperors had never been on the best of terms, and now that both were in Rome their disagreement became notorious. However, the advance of the Persians against Mesopotamia and the raids of the Goths in the Balkan provinces demanded their presence on the frontiers, and it was determined that Pupienus should take command in the East and Balbinus on the Danube. But the prætorians, who remembered the *émeute* which had almost ended in their destruction, were resolved

[1] The statement that he was associated with his father as Augustus is disproved by the evidence of coins.

to submit no longer to the rule of the Senate. Whilst all Rome was celebrating the Capitoline festival, they invaded the Imperial palace and seized the person of Pupienus. Balbinus, infatuated with jealousy, suspected a ruse, and refused to send the German guards to the rescue of his colleague. He, too, was speedily secured by the prætorians, who brutally maltreated and at length assassinated both the Augusti. They then proclaimed the young Gordian Emperor—the sole survivor of the seven who in the space of a few months had worn the Imperial purple.[1]

The first act of Gordian III. was to avenge the murder of his grandfather and uncle. Capellianus had refrained from giving active support to the cause of Maximinus after the fall of the elder Gordians, and the victory of the Senate left him helpless. He was deposed and doubtless executed, and the Third Legion, which had been stationed in Africa since the foundation of the principate, ceased to exist.[2] Its name and titles were erased from the inscriptions which it had set up, and its place was taken by detachments from two of the Rhine legions, which were stationed in Mauretania. In A.D. 240 these troops were called in to suppress a rising at Carthage headed by a certain Sabinianus.

[1] The chronology of the events recorded in the text is very doubtful, but it is probable that Gordian III. became sole Emperor about the middle of June, A.D. 238.

[2] The soldiers were distributed amongst other corps, especially in Rætia, and many of them took part in Valerian's march to Italy (p. 293). In return for their support Valerian reconstituted the legion (A.D. 253).

On the lower Danube the forward movement of the Goths and kindred tribes threatened the Empire with the loss of its central territories. Already the city of Istrus in Lower Mœsia had been destroyed by the invaders, and Marcianopolis was menaced. The danger was averted by Tullius Menophilus, who had distinguished himself by his defence of Aquileia against the troops of Maximinus. He now took the command of Lower Mœsia and for three years kept the Goths and Carpi[1] at bay, partly by force of arms, partly also by yearly subsidies. In the East the new Persian monarchy, under Shapur I., the successor of Ardashir, carried on a vigorous offensive against the frontier provinces of Rome. The desert fortress of Hatra, which had defied Roman and Parthian alike, was captured by Shapur; and even before the fall of Maximinus, Nisibis and Carrhæ had fallen into his hands. For some years no attempt was made to recover the lost territories; but in A.D. 241 Gordian, now seventeen years old, was married to Tranquillina, the daughter of C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus, who had risen from a subordinate post in the prætorian guard to a high position in the equestrian service. His talents appear to have been mainly financial—there were few parts of the Empire in which he had not served as an agent of the treasury—but he had also been charged temporarily with the duties of officials as high as the proconsul of Asia and the governor of Lower Germany. Having now become the father-in-law

[1] The Carpi were of Dacian stock; they have given their name to the Carpathian range.

of the Emperor, he was promoted to the prefecture of the guard, and was henceforth the virtual ruler of the Empire. The discipline of the army was strictly maintained, the services of supply and transport were made efficient, and in A.D. 242 the young Emperor solemnly opened the Temple of Janus for the last time in Roman history and set out on his Eastward march. Timesitheus soon proved himself the organiser of victory. The Persians were forced to retreat: Carrhæ was recovered, and a Roman vassal, Abgar XI., once more reigned in Edessa. Finally, a decisive victory at Resaina opened the way to Nisibis, which was retaken by the Romans. Gordian now resolved to lead his army into the enemy's country and rival the exploits of Septimius Severus; all was ready for the advance, when Timesitheus died. His successor in the command of the guards was M. Julius Philippus, who was shrewdly suspected of having compassed his death. Philippus was an Arabian, and, if historians speak truly, the son of a notorious brigand: he soon contrived to incite the army against the unsoldierly Gordian, who was forced (as we are told) to accept him as a colleague, but was notwithstanding sacrificed to his ambition, and lost his life in a mutiny near Circesium on the Euphrates (February, A.D. 244). Philippus was at once recognised as Emperor by the army and the Senate; but though he owed his position to the troops, he lost no time in showing that he had no desire for military glory. A peace without honour put an end to the Persian campaign, and in a few months' time Philippus made his entry

into Rome. It would appear that he fought with success against the Carpi in A.D. 245; but his government was weak, and the disruption of the Empire, so soon to follow, was foreshadowed by the rise of usurpers in the East and on the Danube. The most remarkable event of the reign was the celebration of the one-thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome (April 21, A.D. 248) by "secular games" of unprecedented magnificence. The new *saeculum* which was thus inaugurated was hailed as the returning age of gold; but fate was soon to write a terrible commentary on these baseless predictions. The legions of the Danube put forward a candidate for Empire in the person of one of their officers, Marinus Pacatianus; and Philippus despatched a force under C. Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius, an experienced commander and a native of Pannonia, to suppress the revolt. Marinus was soon murdered by his own troops; but Decius found himself forced against his will to champion the cause of the army, and allowed himself to be proclaimed Emperor (winter of A.D. 248–9). Philippus marched northwards, leaving his son, whom he had associated with himself in the Empire, to carry on the government in Rome; but at Verona he was defeated and killed, and his son was thereupon strangled by the prætorians (A.D. 249).

The murder of Emperors and the horrors of civil strife were terrible enough; but worse was to come. The rising tide of barbarism was beating ominously upon the Northern frontier, and threatening to sweep away the barriers which protected Rome, and, with

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PHILIP THE ARABIAN.

(*Vatican.*)

Rome, Western civilisation. In the third quarter of the second century A.D. the great nation of the Goths had left their homes on the Baltic and made their way through Central Europe to the shores of the Euxine. The peoples of "Scythian" stock who had troubled the peace of Rome in the past—Bastarnæ, Roxolani, Iazyges, and the rest—sank into insignificance, absorbed or destroyed by the all-conquering Northmen, and soon their hordes began to throng across the Danube, or to take ship and harry the coasts of the Black Sea. The nation was divided into two main stocks, the Visigoths in the West and the Ostrogoths in the East; and the latter were ruled, at the time when Decius became Emperor, by a vigorous and aggressive king, Cniva. No sooner, therefore, had he secured his power and conferred the rank of Cæsar on his two sons, Herennius and Hostilianus, than he was obliged to hasten to the defence of the Mœsian provinces. The Goths passed the Danube with two great armies. One of these attacked the fortress of Novæ (Sistova), which was gallantly defended by the Governor of Lower Mœsia, Trebonianus Gallus; the other engaged the troops commanded by the Emperor, who beat them off from the walls of Nicopolis (Nicup, in Bulgaria), the city founded by Trajan to commemorate his victory over the Dacians. Cniva then marched southward, crossed the undefended passes of the Balkans, and approached Philippopolis. Decius followed, but was routed in the field and escaped with difficulty, while Philippopolis fell by the treachery of its defenders and Thrace and Macedonia were laid waste by the

barbarians. As they returned northward, laden with booty, Decius placed his army across their path in the marshes of the Dobrudsha, but was again defeated and lost his life, together with his elder son (A.D. 251). It was hinted that Trebonianus Gallus had treacherously delayed to bring up the army whose presence might have turned the scale; and he certainly reaped the fruits of his treason, if treason it were, for he was perforce invested with the purple by his troops. In order to divert suspicion, he adopted the surviving son of Decius and made him co-regent; his own son, Volusianus, became Cæsar, and shortly afterwards, when Hostilianus died of the plague, succeeded to the higher rank of Augustus.

Gallus soon disappointed the hopes of those who looked for vengeance to be done on the Gothic invader: Cniva was allowed to pass the Danube with all his spoils, and even obtained the promise of a yearly subsidy. The Emperor withdrew to Rome, and the chief command on the Danube passed to M. Æmilius Æmilianus, an officer of Moorish origin. In A.D. 253 Æmilianus defeated the Goths in a pitched battle, and was proclaimed Emperor by the victorious troops. Gallus at once summoned the garrisons of the upper Rhine to the defence of Italy. These were under the command of P. Licinius Valerianus, a capable public servant to whom Decius had entrusted the chief control of the civil administration, reviving for that end the obsolete office of censor. They were too late to save the Emperor, who perished with his son in a battle fought at Interamna (Terni); but Æmilianus was soon

despoiled of the fruits of victory. He deemed it politic to declare himself the general of the Senate, whose sovereignty he proposed to restore; but the legions would have none of his schemes, and murdered him in their camp at Spoleto. Valerian's title to the Empire was acknowledged without dispute, and the authority of the Senate received its death-blow.

Valerian was a man of good birth, an experienced, if not, perhaps, a brilliant administrator, and an ungrudging rewarder of merit; he was no tyrant, and we cannot doubt that he had a single mind for the welfare of his Empire; but he was unequal—and how few men would have proved themselves equal!—to the task which fell to his lot. In order to stem the tide of invasion which threatened the Empire from North and East, it was necessary to recreate the army of the early principate, which had been transformed by the Severi into a frontier militia, established in half-civil settlements, and lacking the discipline of a marching force which would have enabled it to strike a blow at the time and place where it was most needed. And if Valerian had realised this necessity he would have been obliged, in order to furnish the means for so great an undertaking, to grapple with the financial crisis, which was becoming yearly more acute. We can measure the gravity of the situation by observing the deterioration of the currency. By the terms of a compact made between Augustus and the Senate between B.C. 15 and B.C. 11, the Emperor reserved to himself the coinage of gold

and silver, while copper was still issued from the senatorial mint. Of the three metals, gold was now but rarely coined, and then in small quantities; pure silver (in the form of *denarii*) had gone out of circulation; and the bronze issues occasionally struck by the Senate, since they possessed a certain intrinsic value, were at once hoarded or fell into the hands of speculators. The currency was practically formed almost exclusively of the so-called *Antoniniani* (nominally of silver), which had been first issued by Caracalla; the percentage of silver in these coins sank with ever-increasing rapidity until they became bronze pieces alloyed with tin and lead and disguised with a thin wash of the precious metal. Such a debasement of the medium of exchange amounted to nothing less than a confession of national bankruptcy.

Valerian's first act was to create a joint Emperor in the person of his son, P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, who seems at once to have borne the title of Augustus; the future of the dynasty, it might be hoped, would rest with the two sons of Gallienus, Valerian the younger and Saloninus. But Gallienus was cast in a different mould from his father, who was at least endowed with a sense of his responsibility. The younger Emperor, despite his outbursts of fitful energy, which, it must be allowed, was not always misdirected, was in reality a conceited *dilettante* who dabbled in many arts and sciences but excelled in none, save in that of the pageant-master. In the creation of spectacular effects he had few equals, and his crowning triumph was

achieved in the long procession which wound through the streets of Rome on the tenth anniversary of his accession, diversified by a whole menagerie of gorgeously caparisoned beasts. For such frivolities Rome paid a heavy price; but to Gallienus the loss of provinces was merely food for jesting.

It was decided that Gallienus should undertake the defence of the West, whilst his father directed operations in the East. For some years Gallienus maintained the supremacy of Rome on the Rhine frontier, which was threatened by the Franks on the lower course of the river and by the Alamanni on the line of the *limes*. The army of the Danube, which was the best disciplined force at the disposal of the Emperors, was engaged in a constant struggle with the Marcomanni, Carpi, Goths, and other tribes, and this stern school of conflict was breeding a race of able military commanders to whom Rome owed her salvation in the crisis which was to come. Further to the East the outlook was dark indeed. Baffled on land, the Goths determined to cleave their way to the spoils of the Mediterranean by sea. They made themselves masters of the Tauric Chersonese—the modern Crimea—whose kings had hitherto been faithful vassals of Rome, but were now forced to furnish their new suzerains with the ships of which they were in need.[1] Coasting along the eastern shores of the Euxine, they fell upon the cities of Pontus, and Pityus and Trapezus suffered destruction

[1] It would seem that the dynasty which had ruled over the kingdom of the "Cimmerian Bosporus" since the days of Augustus was temporarily dispossessed.

Photo] *[Giraudon.*

GALLIENUS.

(*Louvre.*)

at their hands. Soon they waxed yet bolder, and skirted the western shore of the Black Sea until they reached the Bosphorus; then, landing on its eastern bank, they ravaged the defenceless province of Bithynia from end to end. Nicomedia and Nicæa, Prusa, Apamea and Cius were ruthlessly pillaged, and Cyzicus was only saved by a freshet which turned the stream of the Rhyndacus into an impregnable defence. It was vain to look for help to Valerian and the Eastern army, which was on its march to meet a still greater disaster.

Shapur had long been preparing to avenge the defeat inflicted on the Persians by Gordian III.; but as long as the vast mountain fortress of Armenia was held by princes friendly to Rome there was little hope of achieving permanent conquests in Mesopotamia and the West. At last the Roman vassal, Chosroes, was treacherously murdered; Persian troops overran the country and imposed the straitest dogmas of Zoroastrianism on the conquered people, while the legitimate ruler, Tiridates, took refuge with Valerian. From the Armenian highlands the Persian horsemen poured forth in all directions. Nisibis and Carrhæ again fell into Persian hands; and while Valerian was summoned to drive the raiders out of Cappadocia, Antioch itself was betrayed into the hands of Shapur by a certain Mareades, who was permitted to rule over the devastated city as a Persian vassal. Still Shapur failed to force an entrance into Asia Minor through the Cilician Gates, and Edessa, stubbornly defended, stood firm as a rock amid the surrounding flood. It was now

Valerian's turn to take the offensive. Antioch was soon recovered, and the Emperor marched to the relief of Edessa. The events which followed are variously narrated, but there is at least no doubt that the campaign ended in disaster to the Roman arms and the capture of the Emperor's person (A.D. 258). Henceforth Valerian disappears from the page of history.[1]

The immediate result of the Persian triumph was seen in the victorious advance of Shapur, who again captured Antioch and wasted it with fire and sword; the Cilician passes were now unguarded, and Tarsus shared the fate of Antioch. Even Cæsarea in Cappadocia was taken by treachery after a gallant defence, and the horsemen of Shapur carried their raids as far as the shores of the archipelago. But the catastrophe of Edessa had graver consequences than these. The capture of Valerian left Gallienus sole ruler of the Empire, but he lacked the power to rule, and the provinces soon ceased to obey an Emperor who, as they well knew, could furnish them with no bulwark against the arm of the spoiler. Gallienus was quickly summoned from the Rhine to the Danube, where the legions had proclaimed the governor of Pannonia, Ingenuus, Emperor at Sirmium. Ingenuus was defeated and killed at Mursa (Eszek), and Gallienus avenged himself without pity on his followers; but a new opponent took his place in the person of Regalianus, the candidate

[1] The well-known story that Shapur used Valerian as his footstool and finally caused him to be flayed and stuffed rests on no better authority than that of the tract *de mortibus persecutorum*.

of the Mœsian army. His rule, too, was of brief duration, but fresh usurpers sprang up, like hydra's heads, on every side, and Gallienus was never again suffered to reign unchallenged. He clung desperately, indeed, to the possession of Italy and the central provinces, but West and East were alike lost to Rome.

When Gallienus left the Rhine he entrusted his elder son, who remained at Cologne, to the guardianship of an officer named Silvanus, while the chief command on the German frontier was given to M. Cassianius Latinius Postumus. The departure of the Emperor was the signal for a great inroad of the Franks, who swept through Gaul, burning and harrying, then, passing into Spain, captured and destroyed Tarraco (Tarragona), the capital of the northern province; it is said that some bands even made a descent upon the African coast. Postumus seems to have gained a partial success against these invaders, and to have used the booty recovered from them to purchase a title to the Imperial purple from his soldiers. At the close of A.D. 258 he was proclaimed Emperor, and the younger Valerian, together with his guardian, was murdered at Cologne.

The elevation of Postumus was no ordinary *pronunciamiento*. It was the foundation, under changed conditions and with a better hope of permanency, of that "Empire of the Gauls" which had been dreamed of in the revolt of Civilis (p. 102). We can scarcely, it is true, regard it as the uprising of the old Celtic nationality against foreign dominion; the levelling influences of two hundred years had

destroyed nationalism as a political force. The new Gallic Empire was created by the stress of bitter necessity. Rome was not only too weak to oppress the Gauls, she was also too weak to defend them; and signs are not wanting that, although the unity of the Empire was finally restored by force of arms, it was recognised that the *Imperium Galliarum* had saved the West from barbarism in Rome's darkest hour, for the memory of its founder was respected and his monuments suffered no defacement.

The first need was to secure Gaul against attack from the east. The line of the *limes* could no longer be maintained. The forts to the north of the Main had probably been abandoned by Gallienus; and the valley of the Neckar (save perhaps for one or two advanced posts), together with the Black Forest, had fallen into the hands of the barbarian. Hordes of Alamanni had passed the Rhine, streamed through the gap between Vosges and Jura, and ravaged south-eastern France; then, crossing the Alps, had struck terror into the cities of the north Italian plain, until defeated near Milan by Gallienus. Under the rule of Postumus these incursions were effectually checked. The Roman territory on the right bank of the Rhine was, indeed, abandoned; but a chain of forts was set up which secured the line of the river. The war with the Germans lasted until A.D. 262, and five victories were gained of sufficient importance to justify Postumus in accepting the title of *Germanicus Maximus*. It was not without reason that his coins bore the legend *Restitutor Galliarum* ("Restorer of the Gauls"), nor can we feel surprise at the fact that

he was recognised as Emperor (as is proved by the evidence of inscriptions) both in Spain and Britain.[1] The capital of this Western Empire was probably Augusta Treverorum (Trèves),[2] and its institutions were faithfully copied from those of Rome. It had its Senate and consuls; it possessed its state church after the Roman model, with the Emperor, as *pontifex maximus*, at its head; its coins even bore the legend *Roma Æterna*. In fact, it is extremely doubtful whether any trace of Celtic national influence can be detected in the *Imperium Galliarum*, save perhaps for the ardent worship of the Gallic Hercules to which the coins bear witness.

In the Further East an independent state was likewise called into existence by the crisis of the Persian invasion. The desert city of Palmyra, which stands midway between Damascus and the Euphrates, had grown rich under the rule of the Emperors as the *entrepôt* of trade between Parthia and the West. From Palmyra the great caravans (συνοδίαι) set out on their march across the desert to Vologasias and the Persian Gulf; and the Palmyrene community was suffered to levy toll on the merchandise which passed through its territories, in return, doubtless, for military support on the Eastern frontier. The archers of Palmyra were a formidable force, and furnished contingents to the Imperial army; they may be recognised on the Column of Trajan by their

[1] Numismatic evidence appears to prove that he landed in our island.

[2] It is less likely that Postumus reigned at Cologne, where, however, his coins seem to have been struck.

long skirts and conical helmets. The privileges of the city were confirmed, and its prosperity enhanced, by Septimius Severus, who found it a convenient base of operations against Parthia (p. 243); and the leading family of the city, whose members bore the name Septimius, and therefore no doubt owed the gift of Roman citizenship to Severus, came to enjoy a position analogous to that of the petty client-princes of the Roman East in times past. The first Septimius Odænathus seems to have fallen under the suspicion of treason and to have been put to death on that account; but an inscription of A.D. 251 mentions one Septimius Hæranes (perhaps his son) as "ruler of Palmyra"; and at the time of Valerian's defeat a second Odænathus held the principality, with the titles of *clarissimus* and *consularis*, which implied that he had been raised to senatorial rank with the honorary precedence of an ex-consul.

Rome's emergency was Palmyra's opportunity, and Odænathus, a shrewd diplomatist as well as a capable ruler and a general of no mean talent, took the tide at the flood. From the wreck of Valerian's army Ballista,[1] the prætorian prefect, and M. Fulvius Macrianus, seemingly the Emperor's Minister of Finance, gathered together what forces they could, and established a nucleus of resistance at Samosata, with the Euphrates before and the range of Mount Amanus behind. Ballista vexed the Persian army in Cilicia with a harassing *guerrilla*, and Shapur at length turned his back upon Asia Minor and set out

[1] Possibly Callistus is the more correct form of the name.

for his capital with an enormous train of captives and loot. Suddenly, as he neared the Euphrates, the archers of Palmyra and the Arab horsemen of the desert swooped upon his flank, played havoc with his unwieldy force, and robbed him of the spoils he had so lately won. The news gladdened the heart of Gallienus, who added to the titles of Odænathus that of "Commander of the East" (στρατηγὸς τῆς ἑῴας), and permitted him, moreover, to enjoy the appellation of "King" (βασιλεύς) of Palmyra. For the moment his ambition was satisfied, and Gallienus, too, had reason to congratulate himself on the result of his stroke of policy, for the Eastern provinces continued in name at least to form an integral part of his dominions. The troops under the command of Macrianus and Ballista, however, would have none of the "barbarian" as their commander; and as Macrianus, who was well stricken in years, refused the purple, his two sons, Macrianus the Younger and Quietus, were proclaimed joint-Emperors.[1] It would have been impossible for Gallienus to oppose any effectual resistance to their claim to rule the East had Palmyra declared for them, but Odænathus saw his opportunity, and gave tangible proof of his loyalty to Gallienus. Macrianus unwisely resolved

[1] They were recognised for a short time not only in Asia, but in Egypt, as is proved by the evidence of the Alexandrian coinage. After their fall the Alexandrian populace compelled the prefect of Egypt, M. Iulius Aemilianus—his name appears to be thus given on a unique coin in the British Museum—to assume the Imperial title. He was, however, crushed by Theodotus, a commander sent by Gallienus to suppress the revolt. Alexandria suffered severely, and its population was decimated.

to divide his force, and invaded Europe together with his eldest son, whilst Quietus and Ballista carried on the war with the Palmyrenes. In a short space of time the two Macriani were defeated by Gallienus' general, Aureolus, and killed by their own soldiers; Quietus and Ballista were besieged in Emesa by Odænathus, and were finally taken and put to death. The "King of Palmyra" was now *de facto* ruler of the Roman East; but he still professed to recognise the authority of Gallienus and assumed the offensive against Persia in his name. From A.D. 262 to 264 he carried on a series of campaigns which restored to Rome the possession of the Mesopotamian provinces and the suzerainty of Armenia, and following in the track of Trajan and Severus, carried his victorious arms as far as the gates of Ctesiphon. As the reward of these signal services he received from Gallienus the title of *Imperator* (αὐτοκράτωρ), which seems to have satisfied his aspirations. Two years later (A.D. 266–7) he was assassinated by his nephew or cousin, Mæonius, who soon afterwards paid the penalty of his crime. Odænathus was succeeded by his son Vaballath, who was a mere child; but the reins of government were held by his more famous mother, Zenobia, whose fortunes will presently be traced.

Meantime the central districts of the Empire which obeyed the direct rule of Gallienus were sorely vexed. Swarms of Goths and their kinsfolk continued to press southwards by land and sea. The coast towns of the Ægean paid the penalty for the disastrous error committed by Severus in dismantling the

fortress of Byzantium. Ephesus was plundered and the great temple of Artemis perished in the flames. A band of Heruli landed at the Piræus and attacked Athens, but were severely chastised by a body of volunteers under the command of Dexippus, who came of the ancient stock of the Heralds of Eleusis, and afterwards wrote the history of his times in a style which challenged that of Thucydides. Gallienus foreshadowed the policy of later Emperors by bestowing upon Naulobatus, the chief of the Heruli, the insignia of the consulship as the price of his precarious alliance. Even the peaceful province of Numidia was harried by an irruption of Moorish tribes, whose leader, Faraxen, is mentioned in more than one inscription. He was at length taken and put to death in the territory of Auzia (Aumale). The hand of nature, too, lay heavy on the subjects of Gallienus. During his reign a pestilence as fatal as that which had visited Europe under Marcus Aurelius raged throughout the Empire. Dionysius, the Christian bishop of Alexandria, is our authority for the statement that the population of that city was so diminished by its ravages that it barely equalled the number of those between the ages of forty and seventy before the visitation.

In the face of such dangers and calamities Gallienus failed ignobly to sustain the burden of empire; yet, frivolous as he was, his government was not altogether without method and principle. He saw in the theoretical prerogative of the Senate and the practical power exercised by the senatorial order in

THE SO-CALLED TEMPLE OF MINERVA MEDICA.

(Part of the palace of Gallienus on the Esquiline.)

From an engraving by Piranesi.

provincial commands an obstacle to the free working of military autocracy, which—not wholly without reason—he considered to be the first necessity of the time; and he set himself surely and steadily to reduce the Senate to a condition of entire impotence. It had long been the custom for the "prefect of the camp," an officer of equestrian rank, usually promoted after long service in the ranks of the centurions, to take the command of a legion in the absence of its senatorial *legatus*. Gallienus gradually removed all senators from military commands and filled their places by the "prefects of the legion," as they were now called. At first they were treated merely as representatives of the *legatus* (*agens vices legati*, as the phrase runs in inscriptions), but before long this pretence was dropped, and the exclusion of the Senate from all control over the army became an acknowledged principle. Not content with this, Gallienus ousted the senatorial governors of provinces and replaced them by equestrian *praesides*; here, too, the change was gradual, and the course of appointing a procurator to the post of acting-governor was not without precedent. Soon, however, the deputy-governor becomes an independent *praeses* with the title of *vir perfectissimus*, which denotes the higher grade of equestrian rank, just as *vir clarissimus* (in the third century) was the distinctive appellation of the senator.

This anti-senatorial policy appears to us at least vindictive, if not unwise; there is some ground for passing a more favourable verdict on Gallienus' military administration. As we have explained

already, the crying need of Rome was a striking force of great mobility which could supplement the local units formed by the frontier garrisons; and there is reason to think that Gallienus created the nucleus of such a force in the "Dalmatian cavalry," which is first mentioned in the accounts of his reign. A late writer, Cedrenus, tells us that Gallienus first formed "cavalry brigades" (so we should translate ἱππων τάγματα); and the regiments of Dalmatian horse must have found their place in these bodies.[1] The chief command of the cavalry—a position which finds its counterpart at a later time in that of the *magister equitum* of the system of Constantine—raised its holder to an importance second only to that of the Emperor; and it was conferred by Gallienus upon his most competent general, Aureolus, who had played a prominent part in the suppression of the rebellion on the Danube (p. 299). The career of Aureolus is hard to trace, for our authorities are conflicting and untrustworthy; we are asked to believe that he was proclaimed Emperor by the army, yet pardoned by Gallienus and sent by him against Postumus. It is at all events certain that he was employed in the defence

About the middle of the third century we first meet with the *protectores*, who formed an Imperial bodyguard and at the same time a seminary of officers. The origin and early history of this force are hard to trace; Cedrenus ascribes its creation to Gordian III, and the evidence of inscriptions *can* be brought into agreement with his statement. It would seem that the title *protector* was at first an honorary one, conferred after long service; but by the time of Gallienus the *protectores* had ceased to be titular *aides-de-camp* and had been converted into a new guard, in which veteran officers served beside young aspirants after a military career.

of the North-west frontier of Italy against the Empire of the Gauls, and that he finally threw off his allegiance to Gallienus and marched on Rome. Gallienus was now in a desperate strait. After the death of Odænathus the rulers of Palmyra had treated the supreme command in the East as their hereditary right, and Gallienus' prætorian prefect, Heraclian, who had been despatched to Syria to assert the Imperial authority, was ignominiously defeated. The Emperor was himself engaged in repelling a Gothic inroad on the Danube; but on hearing of Aureolus' *pronunciamiento* he turned his face towards Italy, met and defeated the usurper on the Addua, and shut him up within the walls of Milan. At length, however, the discontent engendered by his folly and weakness came to a head. A conspiracy was formed in the camp of the besiegers, in which all the leading generals of the staff are said to have been concerned. It was resolved that Gallienus should die, and he fell (according to the most picturesque version of the story) by an arrow which appeared to be shot at a venture (March 4, A.D. 268). M. Aurelius Claudius, a distinguished officer of Illyrian origin, trained in the hard school of warfare on the Danube frontier, was at once proclaimed Emperor. Aureolus was forced to surrender at discretion, and, though spared by Claudius, met his end shortly afterwards in a final act of rebellion. The Senate had no choice but to ratify the decision of the army, and was even forced to decree divine honours to Gallienus by the new Emperor, who was desirous of concealing the revolutionary basis

of his power.[1] Rome was once more ruled by a soldier and a statesman, and a brighter day began to dawn.

[1] The fate of Gallienus' younger son, Saloninus, is uncertain. According to one account he was murdered at Rome on the receipt of the news of Gallienus' death.

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ROYAL ASIATIC

IX

THE RESTORATION OF IMPERIAL UNITY

IT was impossible for Claudius to attempt the task of reconquering the lost dominions of Rome until the enemy had been driven back from the gates of Italy; for the barbarians had overrun Switzerland and the Tyrol and were now streaming into the plains of Northern Italy by the Alpine passes. By the Lake of Garda Claudius met and defeated the invaders, and the Northern frontier was secured against further attack; the title *Germanicus Maximus* expressed the importance of the victory.

But it was not enough to save Italy from the immediate peril. The Goths still harried the Balkan provinces, and Thessalonica itself was hard pressed by their bands. In A.D. 269 Claudius took the field, and the Goths relaxed their hold upon the Ægean seaboard and moved northwards, in the confident hope that the fate which had befallen Decius would overtake a second Emperor. But the Romans had learnt much by the experience of eighteen years, and Claudius was a commander whose like the Goths had not met. He drove them up the valley of the Axius

(Vardar) and into that of the Margus (the Servian Morava), where he finally gained a decisive victory at Naissus (Nish). Its effect was crushing. In the course of the year's campaign the Goths were driven beyond the Danube, and more than a century was to pass before they tasted their vengeance on the stricken field of Adrianople (p. 422). Claudius had justly earned the surname of *Gothicus* which he bore, and still bears in history.

In the West the authority of Rome was reasserting itself. The Empire of the Gauls was not free from that internal strife which had brought the rule of the legitimate Emperors so low. It would seem that usurpers arose to challenge the title which Postumus had made good by ten years of strong and beneficent rule. We hear of a certain Ulpius Cornelius Lælianus, who set up the standard of rebellion at Mainz, and of a still more shadowy Emperor, M. Aurelius Marius, who is scarcely more than a name to us.[1] It appears that Postumus found it necessary, at the close of his reign, to associate with himself a co-regent in the person of M. Piavonius Victorinus,[2] an officer in the "prætorian guard" which he had formed. As to his end we have no trustworthy information; but there is some reason to think that his strictness provoked a mutiny in which he lost his life. The Gallic Empire was already crumbling away. The coinage of the Imperial mint at Tarraco was carried on in

[1] The dates and order of succession of the Gallic Emperors are quite uncertain, and must remain so unless inscriptions furnish the clue which we need.

[2] Possibly M. Pius Avvonius Victorinus.

Claudius' name from the beginning of his reign; Spain, therefore, had ceased to recognise the ruler of the Gauls. More than this, the old province of Narbonensis, at least that part which lay to the east of the Rhone (modern Provence), had returned to its allegiance. Inscriptions found at Grenoble and at Forest-St. Julien (Isère) prove that Claudius maintained a mixed force in that region under the command of Iulius Placidianus, who (when first sent thither) was præfect of the night-watch of Rome, but was soon promoted to senatorial rank and the prefecture of the prætorians. Thus Claudius had little to fear on the side of Gaul.

In the East, however, it was otherwise. The government of Palmyra was now in the hands of Zenobia, one of the small band of women born to be rulers of men. She partook in the fullest measure of the culture of her time, Hellenic and Oriental, and chose as her ministers the Greek rhetorician Longinus[1] and the Christian bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, whose subtle intellect played dangerously with the mysteries of faith. Doubtless it was her hope that Palmyra might become the capital of a state embracing Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Nearer East, the focus of a civilisation born of the fusion of Greek with Oriental ideas. But to achieve this end it was necessary to oppose the power of Rome with diplomacy, and, when that should fail, by force of arms; and Zenobia did not shrink from either test. As "Commander of the East" Odæ-

[1] Modern criticism has cast grave doubt upon his claim to be the author of the famous tract "On the Sublime."

nathus had led the legions of Rome against Shapur; but since his death and the rupture with Gallienus the Roman army in the East—so far as it still existed—had been disbanded or withdrawn, and its place had been taken by a purely Palmyrene force, whose strength lay partly in its redoubtable archers and partly in its heavy cavalry (*clibanarii* or cuirassiers). Zenobia, however, was by no means anxious to precipitate the decisive struggle between Rome and Palmyra. On the accession of Claudius the mint of Antioch—which was under Palmyrene control—continued to issue coins with the Imperial effigy; and Vaballath assumed no title save those which his father had borne in virtue of the grant of Gallienus. It may be that Zenobia would have been content to accept at Claudius' hands the renewal of the powers conferred upon Odænathus; but the Emperor firmly refused to accord any recognition to his rebellious vassal, and it became manifest that he would sooner or later endeavour to reduce Palmyra to submission. Zenobia determined to forestall his action, and in A.D. 269, when Claudius was in the thick of his campaign against the Goths, she threw off the mask. The Imperial coinage at Antioch ceased, and the Palmyrene army, under its general Zabdas, invaded Egypt, where a revolt against Roman authority had been fomented by a certain Timagenes. The Roman commander, Probus or Probatus, made a gallant resistance, which was at first successful; but he finally fell into a trap set by Timagenes, and being severely defeated, committed suicide. The Roman troops were confined within the walls of Alexandria,

and Upper Egypt was overrun by the Blemmyes, a desert tribe of Arab stock whose home lay above the first cataract.

Claudius was not destined to become the restorer of the Empire. Early in A.D. 270 he took the field once more on the Danube frontier and crushed in detail such Gothic bands as attempted to cross the river. The plague was still raging, and decimated the ranks of the barbarians; but at length it appeared in the camp at Sirmium, and amongst its victims was the Emperor (April?, A.D. 270). His brother, M. Aurelius Claudius Quintillus, to whom he had committed the defence of Northern Italy, was immediately proclaimed Emperor by his troops and recognised by the Senate and the Western provinces. But they had reckoned without the army of the Danube, which bore the brunt of the defence of Rome and owned allegiance to no Emperor who was not of its choosing. Scarcely was Quintillus seated upon the throne when the Pannonian legions set up a rival in the person of L. Domitius Aurelianus, an officer whose tried ability Claudius had rewarded with the chief command of the cavalry. The fate of Quintillus could not be doubtful. He perished at Aquileia, whether by his own hand or by that of his soldiers, and Aurelian's title was established beyond question.[1]

[1] This is the most probable account of the events which followed the death of Claudius. We are told by one authority that on his death-bed he designated Aurelian as his successor; but this is evidently a fiction circulated in the interest of the new ruler, who caused Claudius to be deified and desired to be regarded as his lawful representative. The reign of Quintillus cannot have been very brief, since coins were struck in his name at Tarraco, Cyzicus, Alexandria, and also at Siscia (Siszek

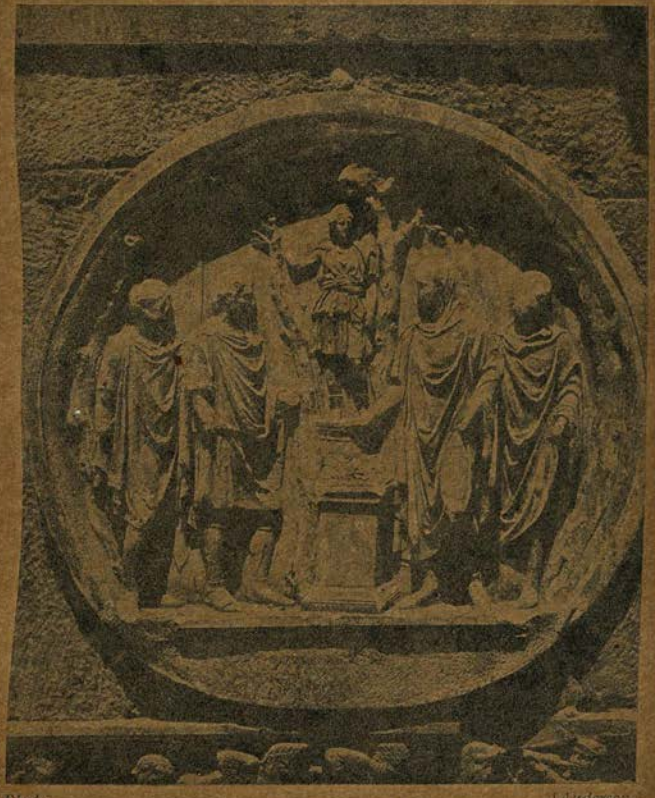

Photo. [*Anderson.*

CLAUDIUS GOTHICUS SACRIFICING.

(*From the Arch of Constantine.*)

The legions had chosen well. It is true that Aurelian was only the son of a Pannonian peasant, and even the place of his birth was not certainly known; but he had been bred, like so many of his race, to the soldier's trade, and when he became Emperor at fifty-five years of age, he was a master of his art. We may not indeed endorse the language of the historian who compares him with Alexander of Macedon and Julius Cæsar; yet he must rank with the great commanders of history in virtue of his splendid achievement—the reconquest, within three years, of East and West, and the repulse of the barbarians from the Northern frontier. By the boldness of his strategy, the rapidity of his movements, and the terrific force of his attack he recalls the greatest leaders of ancient and modern times. But Aurelian was more than a soldier. Of culture, indeed, he had little or none; but he was free from the coarser vices of the camp and, though stern, was never brutal; and above all, the iron will of the despot was guided by the instincts of the statesman. Short as his reign was, it was long enough to show that he had as clear a conception of Imperial policy as Hadrian or Septimius Severus.

His first act showed him a master of statecraft. Syria and the adjoining provinces, all Egypt save Alexandria, and the greater part of Asia Minor, were in the hands of the Palmyrenes. At the close of Claudius' reign they had invaded Bithynia and

on the Save), which is but a short distance from Sirmium, where Aurelian was proclaimed Emperor. A milestone bearing his name has even been found in Mauretania.

appeared before the walls of Chalcedon; but on the news of Aurelian's accession the Bithynians took heart of grace and beat off the enemy. It was no time, however, to measure swords with Palmyra; the peril which threatened Italy and the Illyrian provinces was far too grave. Aurelian therefore concluded a convention with the Palmyrene government which brought peace to the East, saved in some measure the honour of Rome, and gave Aurelian the breathing-space which he so sorely needed. Our knowledge of this convention is drawn, not from the pages of historians, but from the legends of the coins struck at Antioch and Alexandria. Hitherto these mints[1] had coined in the name of the Roman Emperor only; we now find on the one face the name of Aurelian, on the other that of "Julius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus, king, consul, Imperator, commander of the Romans." In other words, Vaballath was now the acknowledged holder of his father's titles, together with the dignity of consul, to which Odænathus had never actually attained;[2] he was sovereign in his own dominion of Palmyra, and practically co-regent with Aurelian in the remainder of the Roman East. Zenobia, though her effigy was not allowed to appear on the

[1] It will be remembered that the coinage of Antioch had temporarily ceased in A.D. 269 (p. 315).

[2] The symbol Υ on the coins of Alexandria has generally been expanded ὑ(πατικός), *i.e.*, *consularis*, indicating the honorary precedence of an ex-consul: but an Egyptian papyrus of March 11, A.D. 271 (the latest dated document before the final breach with Rome) gives to Vaballath the title ὕπατος (*consul*), which may have been conferred upon him by the convention of A.D. 270.

coinage, bore the proud title of *Augusta*, hitherto reserved for princesses of the Imperial house. One thing only was needed to crown her triumph—that her son should be styled *Augustus*. But the assumption of such a title meant war with Rome, and for this Palmyra was not yet prepared.

Aurelian was no sooner established on the throne than he was called upon to deliver Italy from a new enemy. The Juthungi, whose name now appears for the first time in the pages of history, were a German people living on the upper Danube in close neighbourhood with the Alamanni. They had for some time past furnished mercenary contingents to the Roman army; they now coveted a share in the lands which they had helped to defend. Crossing the Danube, they attacked the towns of Rætia, which fell an easy prey; but they were not content with the plunder of a province too often harried already, and made their way by the passes of the Splügen and the Brenner into the plains of Italy. Aurelian might have proceeded directly against them by way of Aquileia, but he chose a bolder course. Marching through Noricum to the north of the Alps, he threatened to cut off the retreat of the enemy, who hastily recrossed the mountains in the hope of securing their booty. They were just too late. Aurelian fell upon them as they approached the Danube, and though part of the horde made good its escape, the rest were forced to sue humbly for peace. Their envoys were treated with haughty contempt by Aurelian and dismissed with threats of punishment; but they were allowed

to return unmolested to their Northern homes. It would perhaps have been wiser to inflict the threatened chastisement at once, and thus to secure the Northern frontier by the terror of the Roman arms; but Aurelian was in haste to visit Rome, and it is possible that he was also obliged to repel an incursion of Sarmatians on the middle Danube.[1] He was soon to pay a heavy price for his error of judgment.

Aurelian's first sojourn in Rome was brief. It was made plain to the Senate that its authority would be of no account under the rule of an Emperor whose will was law; and Aurelian gave proof of his determination to put down abuses with a high hand by closing the Roman mint. Nowhere had the debasement of the currency been carried to such frightful lengths as in the capital of the Empire. The *Antoninianus* (see p. 295), wherever struck, was merely a piece of *billon* with a surface-wash of silver, and possessed the very slightest intrinsic value; but as issued from the mint of Rome it was on the average 10 per cent. lighter than the corresponding pieces of Tarraco, Siscia, Cyzicus and Antioch; moreover, it contained a smaller percentage of silver and copper and a much larger alloy of tin, lead, and zinc. To crown all, the Imperial freedmen to whom the control of the mint was entrusted actually reaped a rich

[1] It is difficult to assign to any other period the successes which earned for Aurelian the surname *Sarmaticus*, found in an inscription of Serdica (Sofia); some authorities, however, hold that the Sarmatians were allied with the Vandals, *v.* next page.

harvest by striking false coins! These shameless frauds were brought to a sudden end by Aurelian's drastic measure; but time failed him to carry out the reform of the currency which he had at heart, for he was shortly called to meet a fresh invasion.

On the upper waters of the Theiss, in the modern Hungary, lived a people whose name was in later days to become the symbol of barbarism—the Vandals, or at least one branch of that warlike stock. They now crossed the Danube to the south of the first great bend in its course and ravaged Upper and Lower Pannonia. Aurelian gave orders that all provisions and cattle were to be brought into security within the walls of the fortified towns, and marched to meet the enemy, who was unable to advance in the wasted country. After a desperate struggle the Vandals were constrained to sue for peace. Their request was granted, but the sons of their kings remained as hostages in Aurelian's hands and two thousand of their horsemen passed into the service of Rome. The rest were suffered to return to their homes, but a band of five hundred who set forth in search of plunder in violation of the treaty were cut down to the last man. For more than a hundred years the name of the Vandals was not heard amongst the enemies of Rome.

The defeat of the Vandals came in the very nick of time. For months past the Juthungi had burned to avenge the insults heaped on them by Aurelian, and they had now secured the aid of their kinsfolk, the Alamanni. Although winter was approaching, they set out once again on their Southward path,

and Aurelian, while still in Pannonia, received the news that their host had crossed the Splügen and was threatening Milan. It was impossible for him to repeat the strategy of his previous campaign, and he hastened directly to the valley of the Po in order to rescue the cities of Northern Italy from their deadly peril. Again, however, he sought to place himself between the enemy and their line of retreat. The turning movement was successfully carried out; but the barbarians surprised Aurelian's army by a night-attack and completely defeated it.

The cause of Rome seemed well-nigh lost. The fair plains of Lombardy were laid waste with fire and sword, and the victorious Germans reached the shores of the Adriatic and followed their Southward course along the Umbrian coast. In Rome Aurelian's authority was set at naught. The senatorial aristocracy ventured to hope for a restoration of its power. The Minister of Finance, Felicissimus, led the officials of the mint and their little army of subordinates, whom Aurelian had deprived of their source of gain, in open revolt against the Emperor. Worse still, the troops in the provinces threw off their allegiance. Three commanders—Septiminus, Urbanus, and Domitianus[1]—were set up as rival Emperors. The Goths, under their chief Cannabaudes, burst into the Balkan provinces, so lately delivered from their raids. Above all, Zenobia felt that the hour had come for the realisation of her dreams of sovereignty. In the spring of A.D. 271,

[1] A coin struck by the last named has been found in South-western France.

when the news of Aurelian's defeat reached Palmyra, the mints of Alexandria and Antioch issued coins with the legend *Imperator Cæsar Vaballathus Augustus* (or its Greek equivalent) encircling the effigy of the boy-king, who wore the radiate crown reserved for an Emperor's brow, as well as others upon which the portrait of "Zenobia Augusta" appeared for the first time. This was an act of flat rebellion.

In this crisis of Rome's fate the true greatness of Aurelian was revealed. Undismayed by the gathering storm-clouds which menaced his Empire with destruction, he applied himself first to the task of clearing Italy of the barbarians. The walls and towers of the Italian cities were put into a state of defence; the youth of Italy obeyed the call to arms; and in order that the aid of heaven might not be wanting, the Sibylline Books were solemnly consulted, and in obedience to their admonition ancient ceremonies were revived whose magic was deemed powerful to arrest the advance of the enemy. The Emperor chose as his line of defence the valley of the Metaurus, by which the Flaminian Way, leaving the Adriatic at the coast town of Fanum Fortunæ (Fano), strikes westward on its ascent of the Apennines. By the stream of the Metaurus Hasdrubal the Carthaginian had suffered the defeat which gave the death-blow to the hopes of his greater brother; and by the same stream fate was once more kind to Rome. Routed at Fanum Fortunæ and pursued with vigour by Aurelian, the hordes of the Juthungi and Alamanni retraced

their steps by the Æmilian Way; but few of them were destined to return to their Northern homes, for in the plains of the Ticinus (near the modern Pavia) Aurelian smote them hip and thigh with a fearful slaughter. Italy was saved, and Aurelian returned to Rome to chastise his unruly subjects. The Senate indeed was not, as a whole, compromised; but a few of its richer members suffered death, and their wealth was swept into the war-chest. The revolt of the moneyers was a more serious matter; there was a pitched battle on the Cælian; and if the "Augustan History" speaks truly, 7,000 of Aurelian's soldiers lost their lives before the rebels were exterminated. From henceforth not a voice was raised to challenge the authority of the Emperor. With the Senate, it is true, he was never popular; but the Senate was a *quantité négligeable*, and Aurelian never feigned to regard it in any other light. The people welcomed him with enthusiasm as their deliverer from the terror of the Northmen, but they soon found that his help was for those who helped themselves. Aurelian had learnt the lesson of the time, and resolved that Rome should be rendered capable of defence against all invaders. His army had other work to do than to fortify the capital, and he therefore called upon the population of the city to execute the task. All the incorporated guilds of workmen were pressed into the service, and soon the girdle of walls by which Rome is still encircled began to rise.

It was no time for carrying out administrative

changes, and Aurelian soon set forth on his Eastward march. The Roman mint remained closed, but a beginning was made in the reform of the coinage at the other centres of issue. Before crossing into Asia, Aurelian gained a decisive victory on the left bank of the Danube over the Gothic followers of Cannabaudes (p. 323). Five thousand were slain, and the royal chariot, drawn by four stags, fell into the hands of the Romans. It was not until the spring of A.D. 272 that Aurelian was able to open his Eastern campaign; and by this time the tide of Palmyra's fortunes had already passed its flood. In the autumn of A.D. 271 Egypt had been recovered, perhaps by the future Emperor, M. Aurelius Probus. The provincials of Asia Minor had from the first rendered an unwilling obedience to the authority of Palmyra, and were ready to welcome Aurelian as their deliverer from the yoke of the oppressor. Zenobia had even failed to conciliate the Christians, who saw in her only the patroness of an heretical bishop. The Palmyrenes therefore made no serious attempt to check Aurelian's advance until he reached Syrian soil. In Bithynia and Galatia he met with no resistance; Tyana, however, refused to open its gates, and Aurelian, in an access of rage, promised to his soldiers the plunder of the city; but when it fell by treachery, he refused to carry out his threat, and restrained his army with an iron hand. Marching southeastwards, the Emperor found the Cilician passes undefended; for the Palmyrenes, relying on their

Photo] *[R. Moscioni.*

THE WALLS OF AURELIAN.

cavalry, had determined to avoid mountain warfare and, fixing their base at Antioch, to hold the line of the Orontes. At the passage of the river the rival armies first met, and the Dalmatian and Moorish cavalry, skilfully manœuvred by Aurelian, won their initial success against the cuirassiers of Palmyra. The result was striking. Zabdas, the Palmyrene commander-in-chief, resolved to evacuate Antioch, whose population was in great part hostile to his rule, and to fall back on Emesa. Aurelian entered Antioch within a few hours of his departure, pardoned its inhabitants for their enforced treason, and found time to intervene in a dispute between the orthodox and heretical Christians, assigning the episcopal residence and revenues to the bishop who was proved to be in communion with the see of Rome, a notable example of statesmanlike insight. Then he set forth to try conclusions with the Palmyrenes, defeated the rear-guard posted by Zabdas at Daphne, marched up the valley of the Orontes, and at length found the opportunity which he sought before the walls of Emesa. The Palmyrene army numbered 70,000 men, and there is no reason to doubt the statement of the historian Zosimus that it largely outnumbered the force controlled by Aurelian, who could not afford to weaken unduly the defences of Italy and the Danube. Before the terrific charge of the mailed cavalry of Palmyra the Roman horse broke and fled; but, as on many another field, the victors lost touch with their main force in the heat of

the pursuit. Then Aurelian hurled the invincible legions of the Danube against the Palmyrene centre, whose resistance was soon crushed; and when at length the cavalry returned, they were not only too late to save the day, but were cut to pieces by the victorious Romans, in whose cause the irregular corps raised by Aurelian in Palestine and Syria did splendid service. Zenobia judged rightly that Emesa could no longer be held, and withdrew the wreck of her army to Palmyra, which she prepared to defend to the uttermost, trusting that Persia would send help against the hated Roman, and that eighty miles of burning desert infested by the fierce Bedawîn tribes, on whose aid she could always rely, would prove an obstacle too great for the armies of the West to surmount.

She soon learned her mistake. In the blazing heat of early summer Aurelian led his army, harassed by the Arab horsemen of the desert, across the arid waste which engirdles Palmyra and unflinchingly faced the well-nigh hopeless task of reducing the city by siege. The defences were impregnable; the sufferings of the besiegers were acute; the Emperor himself was wounded; the Persian relief force approached by the caravan route from the Euphrates. Still Aurelian clung to his positions with grim obstinacy, and at length succeeded in purchasing the neutrality of the Bedawîn and thus securing his communications with the base of supply at Emesa. Unless Palmyra were relieved, its fall was now a question of time. Then the advancing Persians were defeated and driven back

and the fate of the city was sealed. Zenobia passed through the Roman lines by night and made for the Euphrates; but her fleetest dromedaries were outstripped by the Roman cavalry, and she was led back a captive to Aurelian's camp and treated with the honour befitting a queen. A few days later the Palmyrenes, assured of the Emperor's clemency, threw open their gates. The vast treasures of the merchant city fell into the hands of the Romans; but no punishment befel its defenders, and Aurelian, hoping that his moderation had done its work, entrusted the supreme command in the East to the prefect of Mesopotamia, Marcellinus, and turned his face homewards. At Emesa the leaders of the Palmyrene rebellion were brought before his tribunal. The army clamoured for Zenobia's death, but Aurelian was unshakable in his resolve to spare her: he accepted her plea that the responsibility rested with her counsellors, and executed Longinus and the rest.

Aurelian was called back to Europe by the news of an inroad of the Carpi on the lower Danube; the invaders were soon defeated, and many of them were settled in the waste lands of Mœsia and Thrace. Suddenly came the report that the East was once more ablaze with revolt, and that the work of the past year must be done again. The irreconcilable partisans of Palmyrene independence had formed a conspiracy, headed by a certain Apsæus, and had in the first instance made overtures to Marcellinus, whom they sought to lure with promises of support if he would consent to be proclaimed Emperor in the

East. Marcellinus, however, was firm in his loyalty to Aurelian, and only feigned to lend a favourable ear to their proposals in order to gain time whilst his messengers informed Aurelian of the danger. When at length the Palmyrenes threw off the mask, massacred the Roman garrison, and set up a ruler of their own in the person of Antiochus, a member of the princely house, Aurelian was forewarned and their cause was hopeless. Meanwhile a revolt, as to whose nature we have little reliable information, had broken out at Alexandria. It was headed by Firmus, a Greek merchant of Seleucia, who was doubtless in communication with the Palmyrene rebels, and therefore never assumed the Imperial title, but professed to govern Egypt as the representative of the Eastern Emperor whose existence was presupposed. It is doubtful, however, whether his power extended far beyond the walls of Alexandria, where the commercial crisis brought about by the fall of the Palmyrene Empire had produced bitter discontent with Roman rule.

Like a thunderbolt Aurelian descended upon the rebellious East. From his camp on the Danube he marched with lightning speed to Antioch, and from Antioch to Palmyra, whose defences the rebels had not had time to repair. There was no resistance, and Aurelian, though he spared Antiochus, determined to make a full end of the greatness of Palmyra. The city was sacked and in great part destroyed, and from that day to this its stately ruins have spoken to the traveller of its brief magnificence and its disastrous fall.

Palmyra crushed, it was an easy task for Aurelian to suppress the Alexandrian rebellion. Firmus perished by his own hand, and Alexandria was dismantled, part of the quarter known as the Brucheion, which had contained the royal residence of the Ptolemies, being destroyed. A heavy burden of taxation, in the form of contributions in kind, was laid upon the Alexandrians, and the fame of the great Emperor penetrated to the upper waters of the Nile and brought envoys from the king of the Axomitæ in Abyssinia to seek his friendship.

The subjugation of the East was now complete, and it only remained for Aurelian to reduce the Gallic Empire to submission. Since the death of Postumus it had lost its cohesion and declined in power. Victorinus had been murdered after a brief reign, and the legions had conferred the Imperial title on C. Pius Esuvius Tetricus, the senatorial governor of Aquitania. Tetricus was no soldier, and lacked the force of character which was needed to maintain the independence of the Gauls. The last traces of Roman rule on the right bank of the Rhine were swept away by the advancing flood of barbarism, and bands of Germans ravaged Northern Gaul; Tetricus was opposed by a usurper, Faustinus, who was set up by the legions at Trèves; and although he was able to suppress the revolt, he saw that the dissolution of his Empire was imminent and resolved to throw himself on the mercy of Aurelian. The negotiations were carried on in secret, for the Gallic army was ready to fight to the death in defence of its own interests; and

RUINS OF PALMYRA.

(From Wood's "Ruins of Palmyra," 1753.)

thus it came to pass that the legions of the Rhine and the Danube met in deadly combat on the plain of Châlons. By a preconcerted movement, Tetricus deserted his troops on the field of battle and passed over to Aurelian. The Gallic legions were thrown into confusion and cut to pieces, and the Empire of the Gauls ceased to exist (A.D. 273).

Aurelian received, doubtless at the hands of the Senate, the title of *Restitutor Orbis* ("Restorer of the World"), which he had most justly earned, and celebrated, in the year A.D. 274, a triumph whose splendour surpassed all that Rome had ever seen. He rode in the chariot taken from the Gothic kings, drawn by the four stags, which were reserved for an offering to Capitoline Jupiter, and followed by a long train of captives from the forests of the North; whilst Ethiopians from Nubia and Abyssinia, Arabs from Yemen, Persians, Indians and Bactrians carried the gifts which betokened the homage of the humbled East. Tetricus and his son, in the national costume of the Gauls, and Zenobia, laden with chains of gold,[1] whose weight was borne by her pages, represented the two Empires which had aspired in vain to rival the majesty of Rome; but though they graced Aurelian's triumph, they met with a happier fate than that which had befallen Rome's enemies in the days of old. The Queen of the East ended her days in the seclusion of a villa at Tibur, and

[1] Some historians record the tradition that Zenobia never reached Rome, but died on the journey through Asia Minor; but the weight of authority seems to be against this version of events. The fate of Vaballath is uncertain.

the Gallic Emperor filled an honourable post in the government of Italy.

Less than two years of life remained to Aurelian, and scarcely half that time was spent by him in Rome; yet he accomplished enough to show that he was not only a warrior but a statesman. We are told that Diocletian spoke of him as more fitted for command in the field than for the duties of an Emperor; but this verdict does less than justice to Aurelian. It is true that he could never have thought out the ingenious, but infinitely complicated and artificial system of government devised by Diocletian's subtle brain; his methods were more direct and he was impatient of technicalities. But at least he shared with Diocletian an implicit belief in the divine right of absolutism, and paved the way for the undisguised assertion of that principle which lay at the base of the later system. He is said to have quelled a mutiny of his soldiers with the saying that the purple was the gift of God, and that God alone could limit that gift in time; and the true significance of this utterance was expressed by the religious supremacy accorded by him to the Unconquered Sun-god. It is stated in the "Augustan History" that Aurelian's mother was priestess of the Sun in his native village; but the report is scarcely deserving of credence. It is far more likely that Aurelian's superstitious mind fell under the spell of Sun-worship during his Eastern campaign. A legend became current that in the crisis of the battle of Emesa the intervention of the Sun-god had brought victory to the Romans, and that on

entering that city Aurelian had rendered thanks in the temple of Elagabalus. Henceforward *Sol invictus*, of whose effulgence the lawful ruler of the Empire was the earthly emanation, was exalted by Aurelian above all the gods of Rome, and was honoured with the title "Lord of the Roman Empire," which appears on the coinage. A college of pontiffs, drawn from the highest aristocracy of Rome, was created for the service of the new divinity, and in A.D. 274 a gorgeous temple, filled with the dazzling spoils of the East, was built in the Campus Martius, and dedicated with pomp and ceremony on the 25th of December, "the birthday of the Unconquered Sun."

The act of Aurelian in thus making Sun-worship the national religion of the Empire was no mere outcome of superstition; it was also a stroke of policy. The pale and colourless worship of the deified Emperors had long since ceased to possess any real value even as a symbol of Imperial unity; the line of the *divi* had been broken too often, and posthumous divinity had been cheapened by the freedom with which it was bestowed. The religious movement whose earlier stages have already been sketched (p. 213 ff.) was steadily gathering force, and it was necessary to seek for a unifying creed amongst those which appealed to the deeper instincts of the individual. For an absolute ruler the choice lay between the two great religions whose claims were universal—Sun-worship and Christianity; and for a military ruler, Christianity was barred by its hostility to the trade of war. Christians were,

indeed, to be found in the ranks of the army, but they were few in number, and held aloof from the practices of their fellow-soldiers; on the other hand, the adepts of Mithras, whose tenets were easily reconciled with the official Solar pantheism, were inspired by a creed which breathed the spirit of warfare.

It is natural to inquire what treatment would have been meted out to Christianity by Aurelian had his reign been prolonged. His settlement of the dispute at Antioch, which has been mentioned above (p. 328), displayed a spirit of statesmanlike tolerance; but we are told by ecclesiastical writers that at the close of his reign he promulgated a severe edict against the Christians, which by reason of his death was never carried into effect. There even exist a number of texts purporting to give the Acts of the Martyrs who suffered under Aurelian; but their authenticity cannot be seriously maintained. Probably, however, Aurelian would have persecuted the Christian community with the utmost rigour had his life been prolonged; for he was shrewd enough to perceive that the Empire must either accept Christianity or destroy it, and he would have shrunk from no means of imposing his will upon his subjects. As it was, the church obtained a respite which assured its final triumph. In the dark days of the third century, when the cup of suffering was drained to its bitterest dregs by the subjects of the Emperors, the message of Christ found its readiest acceptance at the hands of the oppressed. Up to the accession of Decius Christians suffered but little serious moles-

tation from the Imperial authorities: Septimius Severus, though he forbade conversions from Paganism to Christianity, left the professors of the new religion undisturbed, and Severus Alexander gave the fullest toleration to all cults and creeds. Towards the middle of the century, however, the government began to take alarm at the spread of Christian doctrines, which were rapidly permeating the Hellenised provinces of the East. Decius endeavoured to crush the sect at a single blow, and decreed that all Christians—men, women, and children—who refused to return to Paganism should forfeit their lives. The attempt—which was brief—was a failure. Many Christians suffered martyrdom; many more, often by the connivance of the authorities, obtained certificates of conformity (*libelli*) and bowed their heads before the storm. Once again, under Valerian, the government directly attacked Christianity; but this time the persecutors struck at the heads of the church and such of its members as held prominent official or social positions, besides confiscating the property of the local Christian communities. Again the field sown with the blood of martyrs brought forth the richer harvest; and when active persecution ceased in A.D. 260, the church entered upon a period of unchecked expansion. Between this ever-growing power and the Solar cult established by Aurelian there could be no truce and no compromise; and his death undoubtedly deferred the fierce and final strife between church and Empire for well-nigh a score of crucial years.

The earthly representative of the Sun-god[1] could of course tolerate no sovereignty beside his own; and we therefore find that Aurelian, though no persecutor of the Senate like Domitian or Commodus, ignored its claims to independent authority and continued to exclude its members from the higher military commands.[2] The rejoicings which attended the triumph of A.D. 274 were tempered for the senators by the sight of one of their own number—Tetricus—in the conqueror's train. Never before had a Roman senator been led in triumph; and though Aurelian treated his captive with all honour and bestowed upon him an important office, he thus made it all the more plain that senatorial rank was in itself of no account in his esteem. One of the few privileges still possessed by the Senate in the administrative sphere—the right of issuing the bronze coinage—was taken away, and the legend S(enatus) C(onsulto) disappeared in A.D. 274.

The gravest problem which Aurelian had to face was that of the defence of the Empire; and here he showed a firm grasp of the conditions of his time. It had been demonstrated only too clearly that the outlying territories on the Northern frontier which the forward policy of the Flavian Emperors and Trajan had added to the dominions of Augustus

[1] It does not appear that Aurelian was *officially* recognised as divine during his lifetime; but more than one inscription set up during his reign calls him "the God Aurelian," and the title "God and Lord" is found on his coins.

[2] At the same time, Aurelian rewarded the distinguished services of equestrian commanders with the consulship, *e.g.*, Marcellinus (p. 330), who became consul in A.D. 275 as the Emperor's colleague.

could not be maintained against the surging inrush of the Germanic peoples. The lands included between the *limes*, the Rhine, and the Danube were irretrievably lost, and if Rome still retained any hold upon Dacia, it can scarcely have been more than a precarious occupation of the territory between the Danube, the Temes, and the Carpathians; the Transylvanian plateau had been evacuated by Gallienus. It redounds to the credit of Aurelian that he recognised the necessity of returning to the old frontier of Augustan days, formed by the great rivers, and gave up Dacia to the Germans, thereby partly appeasing the land-hunger which was driving them against the borders of Rome.[1] It was only too easy to find room for the Romanised population of the province in the wasted lands of Mœsia and Pannonia, where a new Dacia was formed to inherit the name of the old; and it seems on the whole unlikely that the Roumanians of to-day are descended from the Latin-speaking inhabitants who clung to their old homes. We do not know what would have been Aurelian's Eastern policy had a longer life been granted to him; but we may be sure that he would at least have maintained the integrity of the Roman dominions. At the time of his death he was, in fact, preparing to take the offensive against Persia, which on the

[1] The date of the evacuation of Dacia is uncertain. It would seem natural to place it towards the close of Aurelian's reign; but there exist coins struck before the reform of the currency bearing the legend *Dacia Felix*, which may refer to the foundation of the new province, which (it is thought) may have been constituted in A.D. 271.

death of Shapur in A.D. 272 had ceased to be a formidable enemy.

The fortification of Rome was no less patent a confession of the growing weakness of the Empire than the abandonment of its Northern outworks. Throughout the first two centuries of Imperial rule the inhabitants of Italy and the provinces had dwelt unmolested in unwalled cities; it was not until the inroads of the Marcomanni under M. Aurelius that old breaches were repaired or new walls raised. By the middle of the third century A.D. the sense of security had been sadly weakened, and we have evidence to show that under Gallienus the fortification of cities went on apace. Orders were given, for instance, that all the towns of Lower Mœsia, which was peculiarly exposed to Gothic incursions, should be put in a state of defence; and Verona was converted into a fortress commanding the route which issued from the Brenner by the Adige valley. It was left for Aurelian to acknowledge the bitter truth that even Rome was not secure from barbarian attacks.

It is certain that Aurelian maintained the discipline, *morale*, and efficiency of his army at a very high standard, but we cannot point to any specific military reforms as his work. It is worthy of note, however, that he set his face against the employment of mercenary corps drawn from barbarian peoples in return for yearly subsidies; he was always ready to incorporate his conquered foes in the ranks of the Roman army, but only on the condition that they were organised as regular "auxiliary" regiments.

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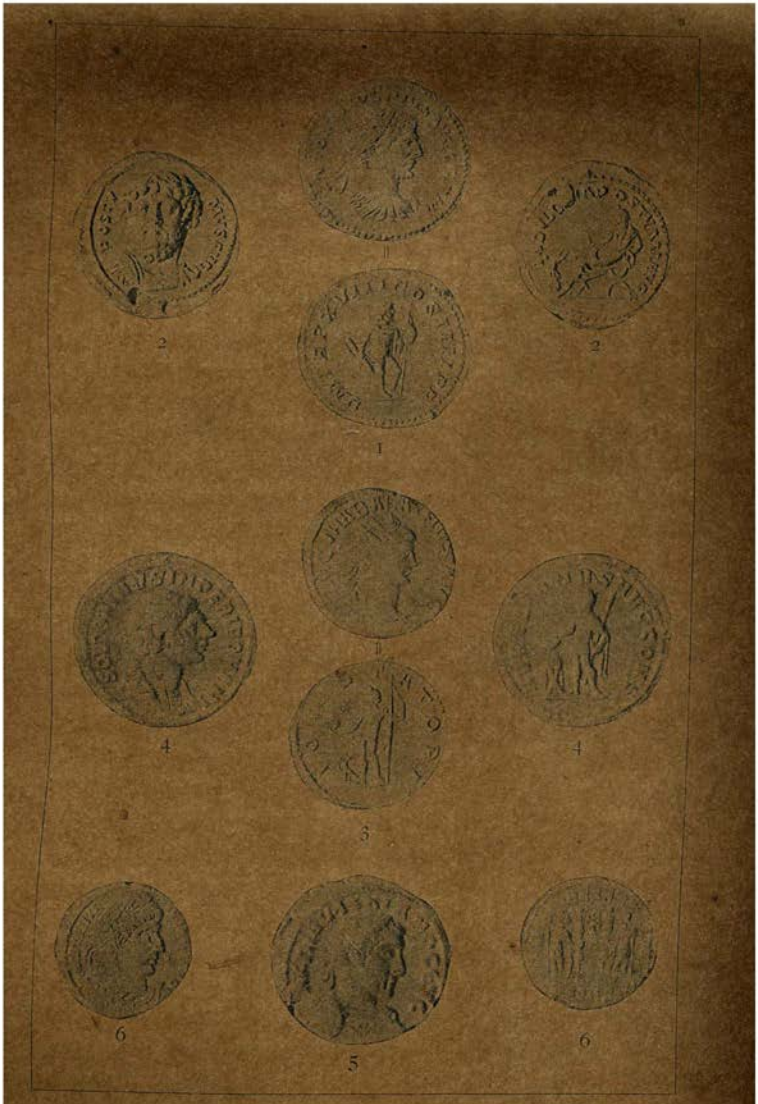


HISTORICAL COINS—CARACALLA TO CONSTANTINE.

1. *Antoninianus* of Caracalla (p. 295).
2. Coin of Postumus.
3. Coin of Vabalath with IM(perator) C(æsar) VHABALATHUS AVG(ustus) (p. 324).
4. Coin of Aurelian with SOL DOMINUS IMPERI ROMANI (p. 336).
5. Coin of M. Julius Æmilianus (p. 304).
6. Coin of Constantine with Christian monogram ☧

how the trade guilds of Rome were pressed into the public service in A.D. 271; it must further be added that in order to supply the populace of the capital with the necessaries of life a number of *collegia* were subjected to a more rigorous state control, and were (in all probability) finally converted into the strictly hereditary castes whose existence is presupposed by the legislation of the Constantinian epoch. Hitherto the Roman *plebs* had enjoyed the right to purchase cheap corn at a fixed price; now wheaten loaves, weighing two pounds apiece, were daily distributed, together with regular allowances of oil, salt, and pork. It is said that Aurelian even formed a scheme for the free distribution of wine, which was to be grown on the waste slopes of the Italian hills at the state's expense; but this was never carried out, although the produce of the public vineyards was sold at a cheap rate in Rome. It was natural and necessary that all the guilds responsible for the maintenance of these public services should pass under the direct control of the state.

As to Aurelian's government of the provinces little is definitely known; but it is important to note that he was the author of an innovation which tended to that assimilation of Italy with the subject territories which it was reserved for Diocletian to complete. As a measure of decentralisation, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius had assigned to *consulares* and *iuridici* the function of administering justice in the various regions of Italy; Aurelian applied to the peninsula the system of *correctores* with military com-

mands, a measure for which the danger of invasion from the North urgently called, but which practically transformed Italy into a group of provinces.[1]

In the winter of A.D. 274–5 the unwearied Emperor once more left Rome for the camp. It seems that the Germans had invaded Rætia and besieged Augusta Vindelicum (Augsburg); and there was trouble in Gaul, especially at Lyons, of which the causes are obscure to us. It needed but the presence of Aurelian to drive off the barbarian and to restore peace in Gaul; and he then set out on his last journey Eastward. It is practically certain that his object was to exact from the Persians the penalty which they had incurred by their support of Palmyra, and to recover Mesopotamia. Ere he reached Byzantium, however, he fell a victim to a conspiracy adroitly woven by his private secretary, Eros, who feared detection in the betrayal of his trust, and resolved to forestall it by compassing Aurelian's death. He prepared a list of officers, himself included, whose punishment, he said, was imminent, and found in them the ready instruments of his designs. At Cænophrurium, near Perinthus, the conspirators fell upon the Emperor and despatched him with their swords (August or September, A.D. 275).

Never was an act more wanton than that which hindered the Emperor who had laboured so well

[1] It cannot be proved that *all* the regions of Italy were placed under the rule of *correctores*, but we know that Tetricus was made *corrector* of Lucania, and other districts can be shown to have had permanent *correctores* before the accession of Diocletian.

for Rome from reaping the fulness of his reward. The army had perhaps regarded the stern upholder of discipline with awe rather than with affection; but it was loyal to the memory of the great soldier who had led it to victory in every quarter of the Empire. It refused to submit to the dictation of the conspirators, who, with almost incredible lack of foresight, had not agreed upon a candidate for the purple; and as Aurelian left no son and had omitted to designate a successor, a request was conveyed to the Senate that it would confer divine honours upon Aurelian and elect an Emperor. For the last time in its history the Senate was invested with something of its ancient sovereignty; but it had by now learnt the limits of its effective authority, and it was not until negotiations with the army had been carried on for several weeks that a new Emperor was created. The choice of the senators fell, not without reason, upon the *princeps Senatus*, M. Claudius Tacitus, a man of advanced years, great wealth, and unblemished reputation. He came of a good Italian stock—though we must refuse to credit the statement of his biographer that he was connected by descent with the historian whose name he bore—and was a worthy representative of the senatorial aristocracy. He did what he could to restore to the Senate the privileges of which it had been shorn; thus the bronze coinage again bore the legend S(enatus) C(onsulto), and senatorial rank no longer formed a bar to the tenure of military commands. But his reign was too short to effect any permanent change. Checked in their Westward

movement, the Goths had made their way into Asia Minor by the east coast of the Euxine, and had penetrated as far as Cilicia. Tacitus took the field against them, together with his brother, M. Annius Florianus (whom he had appointed to the prefecture of the guards), and earned the title of *Gothicus* at their expense; but in the hour of victory he was struck down at Tyana by a band of conspirators, amongst whom, as we are told, were some of the murderers of Aurelian; the rest had already met with the fate which they deserved. Florianus at once made a bid for empire, and not without success; for (as the evidence of coins and inscriptions proves) he was recognised throughout the West. But the army had had enough of senatorial Emperors. The chief command in the Further East was held by Aurelian's most distinguished marshal, M. Aurelius Probus, and on the news of Florianus' elevation the army of the Euphrates promptly swore allegiance to its trusted leader. Egypt espoused the cause of the commander who had delivered it from the yoke of Palmyra, and within a few weeks,[1] when the rival forces met at Tarsus, Florianus perished by the hand of his soldiers, and Probus' title to the throne was made good. He treated the partisans of Florianus with clemency, but put to death such of the murderers of Aurelian as had escaped punishment at the hands of Tacitus.

Probus was an excellent ruler and an able general; but it needed every effort which he could put forth

[1] The murder of Tacitus most probably took place in April, A.D. 276, and that of Florianus in July.

to maintain the integrity of the dominion reconstituted by Aurelian. From the Eastern boundary of his Empire he was summoned to the banks of the Rhine by the bitter cry of the Gauls, whose cities were being wasted by German raiders. Probus was not content with driving the enemy out of Gaul; he crossed the Rhine and chastised the Burgundians, Franks, and Vandals beside the Neckar and on the Swabian Alb. It is said that he restored Roman rule on the right bank of the Rhine; but there is no trace of this in the finds of the *limes*, and we can hardly suppose that he did more than establish *têtes de pont* (as Mommsen suggests) on the further shore. The bravest of the defeated Germans were enrolled in the ranks of his army; others were settled in Britain, and showed their gratitude by helping to suppress a revolt in our island. Probus was, however, something more than a soldier: he did what he could for the furtherance of the arts of peace. Both in Gaul and in the Illyrian provinces he sought to repair the ravages of the barbarians, and on every hand buildings and public works bore witness to his energy and beneficence. Following the example of Aurelian, he replenished the population of Mœsia by granting settlements to the Bastarnæ, whom the Goths had expelled from their homes in the Eastern Carpathians.

Unhappily for himself and for Rome, Probus lacked the genius of command which Aurelian had possessed in so pre-eminent a measure; and the old evil of insubordination made its appearance again. There were attempts, unsuccessful indeed,

but ominous, to revive the Empire of the Gauls; but the usurpers, Proculus and Bonosus, were in no sense the equals of Postumus and his successors, and the revolts were easily quelled.[1] In the East, too, the peace was disturbed by the rebellion of Saturninus, the governor of Syria, who was murdered by his troops at Apamea on the approach of Probus, and by the raids of Lydus, a leader of Isaurian banditti, whom the Emperor pursued to his fastness of Cremna, in the defence of which he was killed. Upper Egypt was harried by the Blemmyes (p. 316), who dominated the Thebaid and captured the important posts of Koptos and Ptolemais; but these were recovered, as it would seem, by Probus' generals.

Meanwhile the Persian question remained unsettled. Aurelian's death had cut short the expedition which should have vindicated the majesty of Rome and restored to the Empire the Mesopotamian districts still in Persian hands, and it was one of the objects of Probus to carry matters to a conclusion in this quarter. Diplomacy was first tried, but this availed nothing, and Probus returned to Rome to celebrate a triumph in A.D. 281. In the following year he fitted out an expeditionary force with which he planned to take the field against Persia in A.D. 283; but it was left for another to lead it against the enemy. In the autumn of A.D. 282 Probus was at Sirmium, his native place, when the discontent of

[1] It is not unlikely that the revolts in Gaul took place whilst Probus was in the East; his name is erased on several inscriptions found in the Western provinces. The chronology of his reign is, however, very uncertain.

the army came to a head. The prætorian prefect, M. Aurelius Carus, was proclaimed Emperor by the troops under his command, and when the news reached the camp at Sirmium, the soldiers, who resented the severity of Probus' discipline and their employment on drainage works, treacherously murdered their Emperor (October, A.D. 282).

The reign of Carus, though brief, was not inglorious. He, like Probus, was of Illyrian origin, and had two sons, Carinus and Numerianus, whom he at once raised to the rank of Cæsars. Leaving Carinus as his representative in the West, he took the command of the army which Probus had assembled and invaded the Persian dominions. Mesopotamia was soon wrested from the control of Bahram II., and the Roman army, following in the steps of Trajan and Severus, carried its victorious advance as far as Ctesiphon, which fell into the hands of Carus. He was saluted as *Persicus Maximus*, but his sudden death—whether by the stroke of lightning, as some authorities tell us, or, as is more likely, by the hands of his soldiers—prevented him from reaping the fruits of his victory. Carinus and Numerianus now became joint Emperors, and the younger brother, whose taste was for letters rather than for arms, led his army back to Roman territory. The story runs that as he was on his journey through Asia Minor he was compelled by an attack of ophthalmia to remain in his tent or litter, and that the prætorian prefect, Arrius Aper, who was also the Emperor's father-in-law, caused him to be assassinated, intending to explain his death as the

result of disease and to claim the suffrages of the soldiery. His treachery, however, was discovered and a council of officers assembled at Chalcedon to elect an Emperor. Their choice fell on an officer of the guard, C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus, who solemnly swore that he was innocent of the murder of Numerian and put Aper to death with his own sword. The East acknowledged his rule without delay; but he had still to reckon with Carinus, who refused to accept as a colleague the man whom he suspected (perhaps with justice) of his brother's murder. Carinus bears a bad name in history, for his biographer depicts him as a pattern of all the vices; yet he seems not to have been wholly without vigour and ability. During his short reign he gained victories in Germany and Britain of sufficient importance to justify him in assuming the style of *Germanicus Maximus* and *Britannicus Maximus;* he put down the revolt of one M. Aurelius Iulianus in Pannonia; and he met with some initial successes in his campaign against Diocletian, the scene of which was in the Balkans. Even in the final struggle between the armies of East and West, which took place in the valley of the Margus (Morava), the fortune of the day trembled in the balance; but at length the scale turned in favour of Diocletian, and Carinus was killed from motives of private revenge by one of his own officers. It seemed as though but one more episode in the dreary tale of strife and ambition had been closed; in reality the defeat of Carinus (A.D. 284) was a turning-point in the history of Rome and the world.

X

DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE

THE council of officers whose choice fell on Diocletian had doubtless no prevision of the far-reaching consequences of their act. It proved, however, to be the starting-point of a new era in the world's history, for it placed the control of the Empire in the hands of a man who was no mere soldier—he was, in fact, devoid of conspicuous military ability—but was a statesman, if not of commanding genius, at least of exceptional ingenuity. We have seen how strongly marked had been the trend towards absolutism under the soldier Emperors of Illyrian stock, above all under Aurelian. But their energies had been consumed in the task of defending the Empire against foes within and without, and none of them had attempted to remodel the fabric of government in accordance with the logic of facts. This task was left for Diocletian, who was qualified for it not only by his ability and insight, but also by his entire freedom from prejudice or prepossession. It is true that he had studied history to some purpose, and was even inclined to

revive archaic titles and institutions, but he had absolutely no respect for tradition or sentiment. Nothing showed this more clearly than his treatment of Rome and Italy. The assimilation of Italy to the provinces in status had begun with Hadrian, but the Italians still enjoyed their coveted immunity from direct taxation. It was withdrawn by Diocletian. Rome was still the "Sacred City," whose eternity it was heresy to question; Diocletian never set foot within its walls until the twentieth year of his reign, and deprived it once for all of the profits and privileges belonging to an imperial residence. There was not a single branch of the administration which he failed to remodel, and he treated the system of his own making with no greater respect than that which he had destroyed, but dealt with the new institutions as with the playthings of his omnipotence. Aurelian had invested himself with the attributes and symbols of divinity; Diocletian drew the logical consequence of this act, and required those who approached his divine majesty to prostrate themselves at his feet and to kiss the hem of his garment. Access to his presence was difficult to obtain, and the ceremonial of the court was so ordered as to place an impassable barrier between the ruler and his subjects. The spirit of the new monarchy was infused into every detail of the constitution, as a single instance will suffice to show. From the time of Augustus the Emperors had accepted the *salutatio imperatoria* (p. 11, note 1,) in honour of every important success gained by their lieutenants; Diocletian refused the title except where

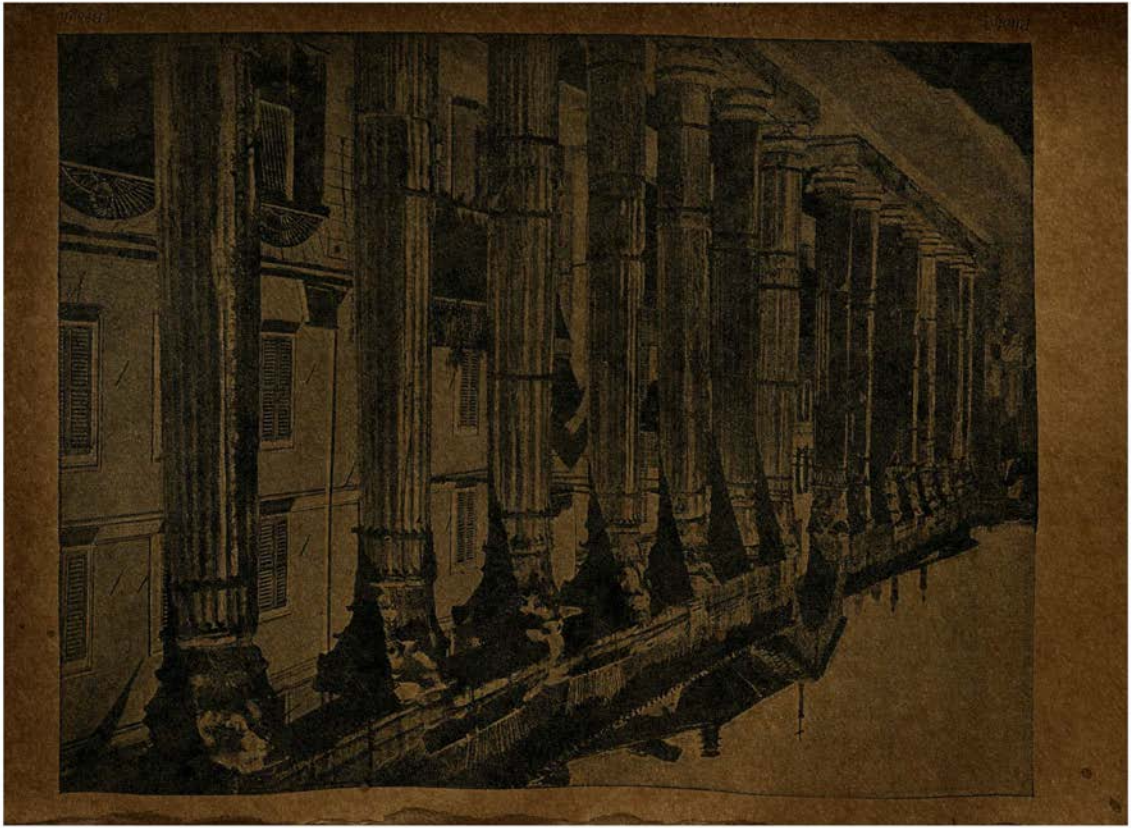
he himself (or one of his co-regents) was in command.

The most remarkable feature of Diocletian's system was the plan which he devised for its perpetuation. This was not, indeed, fully matured at the outset, and suffered change as time brought fresh experience, but as its development determined the course of events, it will be convenient to trace it here before discussing the administrative reforms of Diocletian. The new Emperor had no son and no near relative in whom he could repose the hopes of dynastic succession; but the peace of the West was seriously menaced, and as Diocletian had work to do in the East which he could not postpone, he was obliged to look for a colleague. He found one in Marcus Aurelius Maximianus, a Pannonian peasant who had risen from the ranks to high command in the army, and possibly owed his advancement to the fact that his birthday was the same as Diocletian's. He was rude and unlettered, violent and cruel, but these qualities only served to make him the more fitting instrument for Diocletian's ends. At first, however, he was forced to be content with the empty title of Cæsar, which carried with it no share in the constitutional prerogatives of the *princeps*. It was some compensation that Diocletian, whilst himself assuming the style of Jovius, which proclaimed him the issue and representative of Rome's supreme divinity, bestowed on Maximian the title of Herculius, which recalled the mightiest of heroes, though at the same time it told of the labours imposed on him by the decree

of his divine father. The first task which fell to his lot was the suppression of a peasants' revolt in Gaul, where the intolerable burden of taxation had provoked an outburst of *Jacquerie* so serious as to lead to the creation of a more or less organised revolutionary government between the Seine and Marne. The Bagaudæ (as the rebels were called) were speedily reduced to submission, and all but the leaders of the revolt were pardoned, for German tribes were threatening the security of Gaul by land and sea. Maximian now assumed the title of Augustus, to which Diocletian was forced to give a tacit recognition. In A.D. 286 Carausius, the commander of the fleet assembled at Boulogne to repel the raids of German pirates, tampered with the loyalty of the sailors, and when threatened with punishment crossed to Britain, his native island, and having secured the allegiance of the garrison, caused himself to be proclaimed Augustus. It was impossible, at the moment, to fit out an expedition for the reconquest of the island, nor could Maximian even dislodge the usurper from the ports of Northern Gaul, especially Boulogne, and after four years the Emperors unwillingly recognised Carausius as a colleague. Maximian was more successful in his wars with the Franks, Alamanni, and Burgundians, who were pressing hard on the Rhine frontier, and led an expedition into Germany in A.D. 288. In the winter which followed, Diocletian, who had been active in the East, and had established a friendly prince, Tiridates, on the Armenian throne, summoned his colleague to a conference at Mediolanum (Milan),

where the conditions of the joint rule which he had already accepted as a *fait accompli* were regulated. The formal equality between the two Augusti was expressed by their titles and by the fact that all laws and ordinances were issued in the name of both Emperors, but Diocletian, as the elder ruler, retained the deciding voice in cases of dispute, and, in fact, found no difficulty in imposing his will upon a colleague of inferior intellectual capacity. There was no formal partition of the Empire, for in the spring of A.D. 289 we find Diocletian in personal command of an expedition in Switzerland, although he continued, as before, to reside almost wholly in the East. His favourite abode was Nicomedia, in Bithynia, upon whose adornment he lavished enormous sums. Yet neither Nicomedia nor Milan, where Maximian had his chief place of residence, could in any sense be described as the capital of a divided Empire.

For some years this somewhat ill-defined co-regency satisfied Diocletian, and there was no abstract reason why it should not have been made permanent by co-optation on the death of one of the Augusti. But though Diocletian was without an heir, Maximian had a son, Maxentius, and it was scarcely to be hoped that he would refrain from the attempt to found a new dynasty. In A.D. 293, therefore, Diocletian determined to assure the continuance of the joint rule of Jovii and Herculii by setting up two Cæsars as the destined successors of the two Augusti. Maximian was permitted to choose as his colleague Flavius Constantius, an Illyrian officer of



humble origin who had attained the rank of prætorian prefect and was married to the Emperor's stepdaughter, Theodora,[1] whilst Diocletian nominated Galerius, a native of Serdica (Sofia, in Bulgaria), who, if we may trust the invectives of Christian writers directed against the fiercest of their persecutors, outdid Maximian in violence and cruelty and was entirely without culture or intellectual interests. The Cæsars received the tribunician power but not the *imperium*, so that they held their military command as lieutenants of the Augusti, but they had the right of coinage and the acts of the government were subscribed in their names as well as in those of the elder rulers. The Empire was practically divided into four territories for the purposes of administration. Constantius governed the Western provinces, and fixed his residence at Trèves. Maximian retained Italy, together with the districts adjoining it on the north, and Africa. Galerius administered the Danube provinces and the Balkan peninsula, residing at Sirmium, and Diocletian continued to rule the East and Egypt. But the four colleagues were not limited in their sphere of action to the provinces immediately under their charge; on the contrary, Maximian took the command on the Rhine whilst Constantius was occupied with the recovery of Britain from Allectus, the murderer of Carausius (A.D. 296), and again on the Danube when Galerius was summoned by Diocletian

[1] Seeck has shown that the promotion of Constantius and his marriage to Theodora most probably took place before his elevation to the rank of Cæsar.

to the East, where he retrieved a disgraceful defeat by a decisive victory over the Persians (A.D. 297). There can be no doubt that the security of the Empire was never greater than under the rule of Diocletian and his colleagues; but he felt that his creation yet lacked something to ensure its perfection, namely, an ordered system of succession based upon the limitation in time of the supreme power. It had always been his intention that the Cæsars should in due course succeed to the rank of Augusti, and to Constantius had been given the precedence over Galerius in order that he might one day fill the place of Diocletian. Nor was this all. The sons of Maximian and Constantius were clearly intended to fill the place of Cæsars in their turn. Maxentius was therefore married to the daughter of Galerius; Constantine, who was but a child, was betrothed to the infant daughter of Maximian. Galerius was himself obliged to marry Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian, who thus did all he could to ensure the permanence of his system. But he was not content to await the hour when death should test its practical working. Accordingly, when he entered the capital in November, A.D. 303, probably for the first time, in order both to inaugurate the twentieth year of his reign and to celebrate what proved to be the last triumph Rome ever saw, he exacted from Maximian an oath that when his own twenty years of rule were completed he would lay down the burden of Empire together with his colleague, and give place to the Cæsars. It was no doubt Diocletian's intention that the precedent thus set should be followed

in due time by the new Augusti, so that each ruler should normally govern for ten years as Cæsar and for ten more as Augustus. The symmetry of the scheme was flawless, but it was soon to be wrecked by the ambition of those whose destinies it was framed to control. On May 1, A.D. 305, Diocletian formally abdicated his sovereignty in the presence of his army, assembled in a plain about three miles from Nicomedia, while on the same day Maximian laid aside the emblems of Imperial power at Milan. Diocletian retired to a palace which he had built some six miles from Salona, in Dalmatia, about whose ruins the town of Spalato now clusters. Maximian with an ill grace sought his retreat at a villa in Lucania. Constantius and Galerius now succeeded to the rank of Augusti; but Galerius, whose influence with Diocletian had become paramount, represented that the youth of Constantine and Maxentius made them unfit to be Cæsars and secured the vacant posts for two creatures of his own. These were, firstly, Flavius Valerius Severus, who was to rule Italy, Africa, and Pannonia, nominally as the deputy of Constantius, and secondly, his own nephew Daia, whom he renamed Galerius Valerius Maximinus and placed in command of the Eastern provinces and Egypt. By this means Galerius practically controlled three-fourths of the Empire; Constantius, it is true, was in name the senior Emperor, but his health was failing and his son Constantine was at the court of Galerius, who doubtless intended to detain him as a hostage for his father. Constantius, however, demanded his son's return, and, with or

THE "GOLDEN GATE" OF DIOCLETIAN'S PALACE AT SPALATO.

(*From Adam's "Ruins of the Palace of Diocletian,"* 1764.)

without the consent of Galerius, Constantine hastened to join his father in Britain. The story runs that he outstripped the pursuers despatched by Galerius by commandeering all the Imperial post-horses. He was in time to witness his father's last victory over the Picts and Scots and to be present at his death, which took place at York on July 25, A.D. 306. On the same day the troops saluted the prince as Augustus and the doom of Diocletian's system was sealed, although eighteen years of hollow peace or open war were to pass before the Empire was at last united under the rule of Constantine.

We may now consider the momentous changes wrought by Diocletian in the government of the Empire. It is, indeed, not always easy to distinguish his reforms from those due to Constantine, who carried to completion the fabric begun by his predecessor. Nevertheless, it is clear that the re-organisation of the army, the finances, and the administration is in the main the work of the elder Emperor.

Diocletian succeeded to an Empire whose very existence had been imperilled by the terrible crises of the third century, and he was not slow to learn the lessons which they taught. The Principate of Augustus had perished in the storms which threatened to wreck the ship of state. It had never been more than a sham devised to hide the reality of monarchy and to save something of the Republican traditions of Rome, and the time had come when this was no longer possible or desirable. Fortunately there was no need of violence or bloodshed in the

accomplishment of the final change, for the Senate had been reduced to utter impotence by the vindictive policy of such rulers as Septimius Severus and Gallienus, and there could be no possible danger in readmitting its members to the official career from which they had been excluded by the last-named Emperor. As an organ of government, indeed, the Senate practically ceased to exist save as the municipal council of the city of Rome, but the senatorial order, recruited from the higher grades of the new official hierarchy, took its place amongst the hereditary castes with their fixed rights and duties into which society was henceforth divided. The old Republican magistracies, so far as they continued to exist as such,[1] once more became what they had been in their origin—municipal offices; the only exception was that of the *consules ordinarii*, who gave their names to the year and received their coveted honour directly from the Emperor, whilst the other magistracies, which carried with them the onerous obligation of providing shows for the Roman populace, were apportioned by the Senate. This was all that remained of the institutions of ancient Rome.

But if there was no reason to fear that Diocletian's Empire would be menaced by the revival of the Republic in an age which had forgotten the name of freedom, there were real dangers against which protection was needed. Since the supreme power rested in the last resort with the army, it might at

[1] The ædileship and tribunate survived only as titles carrying a certain degree of precedence in the Senate.

any moment be transferred to fresh hands by a successful *pronunciamiento*, and then the ghastly anarchy of the third century would recommence. Against this, as it seemed, and seemed rightly, to Diocletian, there could be one only safeguard—the division of power. This, no doubt, was one of the ends for which the quadripartite government of the Augusti and Cæsars was devised; but it was still more plainly the motive which induced Diocletian to multiply the administrative divisions of the Empire, and by increasing the number of commands to reduce to a minimum the power of the holders. To this end the existing provinces, together with Italy, which was now finally deprived of its privileged position, were on the one hand split up into smaller units and on the other grouped together in *dioceses*, thirteen in number. A glance at our two maps will show what this change meant. In the time of Augustus the provinces numbered 27; there were now 116. Moreover the governors were (with certain exceptions) responsible, not to the central government, but to the *vicarii* placed over the several dioceses, and they in their turn, as their name signified, were but the deputies of the prætorian prefects, who were the real heads of the administration. The prefects were primarily attached to the person of the Emperor, and neither their number nor the geographical limits of their authority were definitely fixed by Diocletian, but in the latter part of the fourth century there were usually four, whose districts were known as (1) "the Gauls" (including Britain and Spain), (2) Italy (with Africa and Pannonia),

(3) Illyricum (*i.e.*, the Danube region and the Balkan peninsula), and (4) the East.

Diocletian was not, however, content with increasing the number of provinces; he also broke with the ancient tradition of Rome by finally separating the civil from the military power. Hadrian had perceived that a capable soldier was not always qualified to be a civil administrator, and had introduced the distinction between the two careers in reorganising the equestrian service (p. 188); and the later Emperors of the third century had sometimes created military commands which cut athwart the civil divisions of the Empire. It was left for Diocletian to withdraw the control of the garrison troops from the governors of the provinces and to place it in the hands of *duces*, who were, of course, responsible to the higher commanders in military matters, although dependent for their supplies upon the civil authorities. Thus two co-ordinate authorities were set up in every province, and the constant friction which followed, if it was detrimental to the good government of the Empire, at least furnished a safeguard against usurpation and anarchy.

Security was made still more sure by the reorganisation of the army. Diocletian recognised that the force which Rome could oppose to the rising tide of barbarism was deficient alike in numbers and in mobility. The system of immobile frontier defence instituted by Hadrian had been tried and found wanting; it was now imperative to supplement it by a powerful striking force which

could be thrown against the invader at the point of attack. The nucleus of such a force existed in the prætorian guard, but this was far too small to meet the needs of the time. We do not know when Diocletian made the decisive change—one ancient historian, in fact, ascribes it to Constantine; but the evidence of inscriptions appears to be conclusive in the contrary sense. It seems to be true, however, that in the earlier years of his reign Diocletian contented himself with perfecting and extending the old system of *limites*, protected by a chain of fortified posts held by small garrisons. A series of such forts have come to light in Switzerland, where the Upper Rhine now formed the frontier, and one of these (at Oberwinterthür) is shown by an inscription to have been reconstructed in A.D 294. The peculiar type of fort with square towers and small posterns beside the principal entrances is also found on the *limes Arabiae, i.e.*, the outer line of defence drawn from El Mahan to El Kastal on the edge of the Syrian desert; here the station of Kasr Bsher is dated by an inscription to the time of Diocletian. There is likewise evidence that the southern frontier of the North African provinces was secured by a *limes* of the same kind. These permanent defences were committed to the keeping of the existing legions and auxiliaries, and the force thus immobilised bore the name of *limitanei* or (when the frontier was formed by a river) *riparienses*; it was commanded by the *duces* mentioned above, and the full title of such an officer was *dux limitis*.

with the name of the frontier province added thereto.

But the old army, which tended more and more to become a local militia, was of small importance in comparison with the new. It was perhaps the disastrous defeat inflicted by the Persian king Narses upon Galerius in A.D. 296 which opened the eyes of Diocletian to the need of a field army capable of a vigorous offensive; in any case, he was the creator of the force which bore the title of *comitatenses*, and, as the name implies, formed part of the *comitatus*, or immediate retinue of the Emperor.[1] The infantry regiments in this new army retained the old name of legions, but their normal strength was now 2,000 in place of 6,000. The reduction may be explained as follows. In the army list of the fifth century which passes under the name of the *Notitia Dignitatum* we find legions bearing the same name both amongst the *limitanei* and also amongst the *comitatenses*, and in the latter case the legion is often divided into two battalions of *seniores* and *iuniores*. This makes it probable that in order to form his field force Diocletian divided a number of the existing legions into three portions, one of which remained on the frontier while the others passed into the mobile army. There were also cavalry regiments called *vexillationes* in the new force, whilst the *auxilia* of the earlier system

[1] At a later time we find certain regiments distinguished by the title of *palatini*, which most probably carried with it certain exceptional privileges.

continued to exist in the shape of cohorts and *numeri* raised amongst the barbarous tribes settled within the borders of the Empire; these were at first restricted to the occupation of frontier posts.

But the new army, though far larger and more mobile than that which Diocletian found in existence, lacked the discipline and scientific training of that which had maintained the Empire inviolate for three centuries. The ranks of the inferior regiments were filled by a system which converted the provision of recruits into a tax on landed property, apportioned amongst the holders of estates grouped together for the purpose, and we can well imagine that under the rule of corrupt officialdom the least efficient labourers were thus drafted into the legions. For the privileged troops voluntary enlistment no doubt provided a large proportion of the material; but this meant that these corps became increasingly barbaric in character. Above all, the *protectores* (p. 309, note 1), from whom the majority of the officers were drawn, though in part recruited from families which made military service their hereditary profession, also counted amongst their number the *élite* of the barbarian soldiers of fortune; thus the Roman army was slowly but surely denationalised and its most effective units were composed of barbarians and officered by barbarians. They were not, indeed, lacking in personal valour, but they disdained the study of tactics and strategy, and thus the science which, in the days before arms of precision were invented, gave to civilised troops their sole advantage over barbaric courage

was irretrievably lost, and the fate of Rome was sealed.

The increase in the numbers of the army, and the maintenance of four Imperial households, entailed a vast expenditure, which could only be met by imposing fresh burdens on the taxpayer. Not only were the existing sources of revenue inadequate, but their productiveness had been reduced to a minimum by the progressive depreciation of the currency (p. 295). Hence had arisen the practice of demanding requisitions in kind in order to provision the army on active service. Such contributions bore the name of *annona militaris*, and were raised in pursuance of an Imperial decree termed *indictio*. Hitherto this system had been at least in theory exceptional, but Diocletian made it a permanent, and, in fact, the principal method of raising revenue from the landed proprietors of the Empire. From A.D. 289 onwards the *indictio* became an annual institution, and was ere long made the basis of a new system of dating, since the taxable property of the Empire was subject to reassessment at intervals of five and afterwards of fifteen years, and the "indiction" remained in force during each of these periods. The *capitatio*, or assessment of contributions in kind, was based on the division of all agricultural land throughout the Empire, together with the labour employed in its cultivation,[1]

[1] Labour was not subject to the *annona* in Africa and Egypt, which even before Diocletian's time contributed largely in kind to the food supply of Rome; and the "diocese of the city of Rome" (*i.e.*, South Italy), which also bore its share in the maintenance of the Roman *plebs*, was at first, but only for a short time, exempt from *annona*.

into a number of theoretically equal taxable units. Such an unit bore different names in the various dioceses, but was most commonly known either as *caput* or as *iugum*. These terms point to the fact that the normal unit of labour was one man[1] or one yoke of oxen. Land was assessed after a rough-and-ready method, according to the nature of the crops raised therefrom; thus in the East five *iugera* (rather more than three acres) of vineyard always formed a single unit, whatever the character of the vintage. This naturally entailed great injustice in the distribution of fiscal burdens, and the system of collection grievously enhanced the sufferings of the taxpayer. For when the amount of the yearly contribution (*annona*) had been fixed by Imperial decree (*delegatio*), the prætorian prefects and their subordinates apportioned the burden between the various provinces and ordered delivery to be made at the centres where it was called for by the movement of troops or of the Imperial households, and soon there sprang up a system of bargaining between taxpayers and officials for the commutation of payments in kind which led to incalculable abuse and extortion. This practice (known at a later time as *adaeratio*) was ultimately recognised and regulated by law.

The vicious ingenuity which had devised this cruel and wasteful system of taxation was also applied by Diocletian to the solution of monetary

[1] Two women counted as the equivalent of one man; thus an Egyptian papyrus records the payment of taxes on an assessment of 42$\frac{1}{2}$ men.

and economic problems. It would be tedious to enumerate the radical reforms of the currency initiated with bewildering frequency by the Imperial mints; they failed miserably to achieve their object, namely, the establishment of a fixed and simple relation between the issues of gold and silver, and ended by making confusion worse confounded. Still more disastrous was the attempt which Diocletian made to exalt his decrees to the level of economic laws by the famous Edict of Prices (issued in A.D. 301), which we are able in a large measure to reconstruct from the fragmentary copies in stone which have been discovered in all parts of the Roman Empire. This extraordinary document, which records the most thoroughgoing effort ever made to "banish political economy to Saturn," opens with a preamble whose turgid rhetoric and sublime disregard of reality are characteristic of the Imperial chancery. The rulers express a fervent desire to complete the felicity of the Empire which their victories have made secure by bestowing upon it the blessings proper to peace, and also a pious horror at the unbridled rapacity of the traders who batten on the necessities of the people; they threaten with the extreme penalty of the law not only those who sell their commodities in excess of the prices henceforth fixed by Imperial decree, but even the buyer who "from lust of acquisition consents to the greed of the retailer" in defiance of the law, as well as the producer who withholds his goods from the market; and they subjoin a schedule determining the maximum price which may be charged for every imaginable commo-

dity, from cabbages to gold embroidery and from the reward of unskilled labour to the services of a barrister. No account is taken of the difference between wholesale and retail selling, of the infinite gradations of quality in the different wares, or of varying conditions in the several provinces of the Empire; every market alike, whether in East or West, is to have its copy of the edict, and the most trifling infraction of its terms is punishable with death. Small wonder that when the sword of the executioner had slaked itself in vain, the edict survived only as the monument of a blunder which was worse than a crime.

We cannot leave the government of Diocletian without a few words as to the all-pervading system of espionage by which every responsible official was surrounded and controlled. Diocletian set himself to remodel the bureaucracy in accordance with the guiding principles of his statecraft, and by a curious, though merely superficial, inconsistency with his general practice of drawing a sharp division between the civil and military administration, he formed the *officia*, or public departments, into a quasi-military hierarchy with titles borrowed from the army.[1] Similar *officia*, modelled after those of the Imperial households, were created in every seat of provincial administration, and these were made to serve as a check on the independence of the civil

[1] The reason for this was that the Imperial household had even in the early days of the Empire been known as "the camp" (*castra*), and the term was still more appropriate now that the Emperors had no fixed place of residence.

and military governors by means of the principle which made the chief and his subordinates jointly responsible for any breach of regulations or official misconduct. The result was, of course, to convert the *officium* into a nest of spies. But Diocletian was not content with this. In order that he might receive regular reports as to the doings of his subordinates, he created a corps known as the *agentes in rebus*, whose primary and ostensible function was to travel throughout the provinces for the purpose of inspecting the Imperial postal service, but who were in reality official spies, charged to present information to the Emperor on all matters of government. To crown all, the chief secretaryships in the provincial *officia* were not filled by the promotion of the senior clerks, but were bestowed on the *agentes in rebus* at the close of their career, and thus each governor had at his elbow a confidential agent of the central government, whose secret reports might at any moment involve him in irretrievable ruin. In such an atmosphere of jealousy and suspicion there was no place for talent or originality, and the Empire which was thus governed was doomed to destruction.

It was not, however, destined that Diocletian should complete the structure whose foundations he had laid. The acclamation of Constantine as Augustus by the army of Britain (p. 362) did violence to the order of succession established in A.D. 293, and could not, therefore, be recognised as conferring a legitimate title. Consequently, when Constantine informed Galerius of the *fait accompli*,

he was met by the announcement that Severus had in due course been raised to the rank of Augustus in the West, whilst he himself was to enjoy the title of Cæsar. By this time he had crossed the channel and was engaged in repelling the attacks of the Franks and the Alamanni on the Rhine, and although he might have courted the arbitrament of war in defence of his title with good hope of success, he preferred to tread the strait path of legitimacy, secure in the support of a loyal and devoted army. But events whose course he was powerless to control soon made it impossible for him to defer the satisfaction of his ambitions. Maxentius, the son of Maximian, who felt that he had at least as good a right as Constantine[1] to a share in the Imperial power, was living in Rome, where a double cause of discontent with the existing *régime* had been created by Galerius. In the first place, he had made the burden of taxation intolerably grievous by requiring money contributions as well as those in kind, and these not only from the landowners, but also from the inhabitants of the towns, who had hitherto been exempt from the *indictio*; and worse than all, he had deprived the city of Rome of its jealously prized immunity, and commanded an assessment to be made of its taxable capacity. Secondly, he had ordered, and begun to carry into effect, the disbandment of the prætorian guard, whose *raison d'être* had in fact ceased to exist now that Emperors no longer resided in Rome. Maxentius seized his opportunity, secured the adhesion of the remaining cohorts of

[1] He was apparently Constantine's senior by some years.

the guard, and assumed the purple. For the moment, however, he contented himself with the vague title of *princeps*, since he did not despair of obtaining the recognition of Galerius, and perhaps the rank of a third Cæsar. But Galerius, who hated Maxentius, would not for an instant tolerate such glaring insubordination, and at once despatched Severus with an armed force to suppress the usurper. The task seemed to him an easy one, for Maxentius had but a handful of troops at his disposal; but the event soon proved him mistaken. Maxentius' first step was to send messengers to his father, bearing the insignia of the Empire and inviting him to leave the scene of his enforced seclusion and reassert his authority. Maximian readily accepted the invitation, and after writing to Diocletian that the troubled state of the Empire called for the intervention of the founders of the new *régime*, set out for Rome without awaiting an answer. In the meantime the troops of Severus, who had for the most part served under Maximian, yielded to the bribes offered by Maxentius' agents and deserted in ever-increasing numbers to his standard, insomuch that Severus, who had appeared before the gates of Rome, was forced to retreat, hotly pursued by Maxentius, and eventually to take refuge behind the walls of Ravenna. The siege was brief, for on the arrival of Maximian Severus accepted his sworn assurance that his life would be spared, and capitulated. The future now depended on the action of Constantine, and this could not be doubtful, since his hostility to Galerius was scarcely concealed. Maximian crossed the Alps

and met Constantine at Arles, where the terms of their alliance were settled. Constantine obtained from Maximian the confirmation of his title as Augustus and the hand of his daughter Fausta; in return he gave assurances to Maximian of the support of the army of the Rhine. The allies were proclaimed consuls for A.D. 307, but were of course not recognised as such in the East.

The value of Constantine's promise was soon put to the test. Galerius marched into Italy at the head of a large army, intending to avenge on Maxentius the deposition of Severus; but Constantine, though his troops marched slowly eastwards, showed no disposition to intervene in the conflict, as he might well have done with decisive effect. Galerius, however, could make no headway against the armies of his opponents, which occupied strongly fortified positions, and was at last obliged to retreat. He filled the place of Severus, whom Maxentius had by now caused to be put to death, with his nominee, Licinianus Licinius, to whom he entrusted the command of the Illyrian provinces.

Meanwhile Maximian had quarrelled with his son (who was by no means disposed to abate his claims to be the chief ruler of Italy), and at length endeavoured formally to depose him in the presence of the guard. The attempt failed, and the aged Emperor was forced to seek refuge, at first with Constantine, from whom he obtained nothing but empty professions of good-will, and then with Galerius himself. A congress was held (A.D. 308) at Carnuntum, on the Danube, at which Diocletian

endeavoured to save his cherished system, and forced Maximian to abdicate once more; Licinius was recognised as Augustus of the West, and Constantine, who was by now far too powerful to be ignored, received (together with Maximinus Daia) the title of *filius Augusti*, as well as a *first* consulship[1] for A.D. 309. Maxentius was ignored, but for the moment there were no means of making his deposition effective.

Constantine, feeling that nothing was to be gained by an immediate appeal to the sword, decided to ignore the decisions taken at Carnuntum and continued to bear the title of Augustus. Daia, too, soon wearied of the subordinate position assigned to him, and announced that the same title had been conferred upon him by the Eastern army. Galerius had no choice but to accept the inevitable (A.D. 310). The same year saw important happenings in the West. Maximian, chafing at his enforced retirement, seized the opportunity afforded by Constantine's absence on the Rhine frontier, and caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor for the third time at Arles, seeking to win the allegiance of the Western armies by the promise of an enormous donative. It was all in vain. Constantine returned from the Rhine with lightning speed, and Maximian was forced to retreat to Marseilles, where his own troops compelled him to surrender. His life was spared for the time, but soon afterwards he was found dead, and few, if any, believed in the official story of his suicide. Constantine now took a step whose true significance

[1] That of A.D. 307 was treated as null and void (*v. supra*).

has only been recognised in recent years. He determined to seek a legitimacy more securely based than that which he derived from his recognition as Augustus by the Emperor whom he had just deposed, if not actually executed, and for this purpose an official legend was put in circulation which traced his descent to the Divine Claudius, the conqueror of the Goths. In its earliest form the story ran that Constantius Chlorus had been a natural son of Claudius II.; at a later time, when Christian sentiment took offence at the illegitimate origin thus ascribed to the house of Constantine, it was modified in the sense that Claudius became, instead of the father, the uncle of Constantius. For the moment no stress was laid on the claim, save in the panegyrics delivered by the court rhetoricians; but it was easy to see how in due season it might serve as a title to the sole legitimate authority within the limits of Claudius' Empire, and such was without doubt its ultimate purpose.

The twenty years of Galerius' rule were due to expire in A.D. 313, and Constantine would doubtless have been content to await that event in peace, trusting that after Diocletian's precedent the senior Augustus would then abdicate and his own position would be thereby legalised; but in A.D. 311 Galerius died, and the march of events was thus precipitated. It soon became clear that the unreal peace which the authority of Galerius had for three years alone maintained would shortly be broken through the unbridled ambitions of the four Augusti. Daia, indeed, had no sooner learnt the news of

THE PONTE MOLLE (MILVIAN BRIDGE).

Galerius' death than he hastened Westward with all the forces which he could muster; but on reaching the shore of the Bosphorus he found Licinius in occupation of the European bank, and was forced to agree to the maintenance of the *status quo ante*. But it was far from his intention to observe the terms of this treaty, and he therefore sought the alliance of Maxentius, hoping thus to place Licinius between two fires. Maxentius had now enjoyed for nearly four years the undisputed sovereignty over Rome and Italy, where his tyranny had made him odious to every class except the soldiers, who were permitted to work their will upon the unfortunate inhabitants. Africa had been in revolt since A.D. 308, when the *vicarius*, L. Domitius Alexander, had been proclaimed Emperor at Carthage, and it was imperatively necessary to recover the provinces which furnished Rome with a large proportion of its food supplies. Fortunately for Maxentius, his prætorian prefect, Rufius Volusianus, had little difficulty in suppressing the rebellion; Rome was freed from the danger of famine, and Maxentius' army secured a base of supply.

The moment for which Constantine had waited so patiently had come at last. Licinius was obliged by the force of circumstances to recognise him as his partner in the Empire and to leave to him the task of crushing Maxentius whilst he himself dealt with his Eastern rival. Constantine had now ruled the Gauls with justice and moderation for six years, and was secure in the loyalty of his subjects and (what was of far greater importance) of his army, which

had reached a high standard of efficiency in frontier warfare on the Rhine. The time had now come to put its temper to the proof. With a corps of 40,000 men Constantine crossed the Mont Genèvre, defeated the generals of Maxentius in Northern Italy, and captured Turin, Milan, and Verona. But the bulk of the enemy's force—170,000 strong, if we are to believe our ancient authorities—remained in the neighbourhood of Rome, and to advance seemed but to court the fate which had befallen Severus and Galerius. Nevertheless, Constantine resolved to stake all upon the cast. He had not in the past given proof of rashness; how, then, are we to account for this supremely bold venture? The truth seems to be that Constantine had become inspired with the conviction that the God of the Christians, if not the only true God—it would be too much to say that Constantine now or at any time whole-heartedly believed this—was at least the most powerful supernatural force at work in the world. Since A.D. 303, when Diocletian, at the instigation of Galerius, had issued his first edicts against the Christians, enjoining the destruction of their churches and the burning of their sacred books, they had been persecuted with the utmost rigour in the East. In the West, however, Constantius, and his son after him, had refused to execute the edicts of his colleague, and peace and prosperity had reigned almost undisturbed. The most ruthless of the persecutors, Galerius, had just died a miserable death, and had been compelled, almost with his dying breath, to own himself beaten in the struggle and to accord to the Christians

the free exercise of their religion. Constantine now took a further momentous step. All the world knows the story of the vision in which was revealed to him the standard of the Cross, with the legend Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα ("By this conquer"). Eusebius professes to have heard the tale from the Emperor's own lips, but it is significant that it does not appear in the "Ecclesiastical History," written in Constantine's lifetime, but meets us first in the biography afterwards composed for the edification of the faithful. Whatever be the truth of the story, there is no doubt that Constantine adopted the Christian monogram ☧ as his badge, and, strong in his new conviction, marched straight on Rome. Maxentius was slow to shake off his indolence, but at length he decided to give battle to the advancing enemy. When the two armies met, his unwieldy column stretched along the Flaminian Way from the Milvian bridge to a point some miles further northward. Constantine saw his opportunity, and by a rapid turning movement gained the Via Cassia and fell on Maxentius' rearguard at the passage of the Tiber, where, beside the permanent road-bridge, pontoons had been thrown across the river. The legions of the Rhine fulfilled the task for which they had been trained by their leader, and their victory was complete and decisive. The Tiber was swollen by autumn rains—it was the 27th of October—and many thousands of the enemy, amongst them Maxentius himself, were swallowed up in its yellow waves.

Thus were discomfited the legions of the Un

conquered Sun, and the triumph of Christianity was assured. A new Sun had arisen "with healing in his wings," and whatever the demerits of Constantine, his unique historical importance consists in his recognition, dim and unenlightened as it was, of the resistless force which, as he rightly divined, was destined to mould the future of humanity. For the moment, however, there could be no question of according to Christianity the exclusive privileges of a state religion; all that Constantine could venture to do was to recognise it as *one* of the public worships of Rome by exempting the property of its churches from direct taxation. He was also concerned to secure equal rights for the Christians in the East; accordingly, when he had exacted from the Roman Senate the recognition of his seniority in the Imperial college, which carried with it the right of legislation, and had disbanded the prætorian guard, he returned to Milan and there held a conference with Licinius. The alliance between the two rulers was cemented by the marriage of Licinius with Constantia, the sister of Constantine, but it was no easy matter to come to an agreement as to the points at issue. Licinius consented to remove the disabilities of Christians in the East, but exacted from Constantine the recognition of his bastard son as heir to his claims, and the acknowledgment of his right to legislate for his own provinces. The conference was soon interrupted by the news that Maximinus Daia, whose suspicions had been quieted for a time by his nomination to the consulship for A.D. 313, had crossed the Bosphorus and captured

Byzantium. Licinius hastened to check his further advance and inflicted a crushing defeat on his forces near Heraclea (April 30th). Maximinus is said to have covered 160 miles in twenty-four hours in his headlong flight; he died at Tarsus a few months later, possibly from poison.

Constantine and Licinius were thus left face to face as joint rulers of the Empire, but it was impossible to suppose that their hollow friendship could long be maintained, and war, in fact, broke out within a year. Constantine had betrothed his sister Anastasia to a certain Bassianus, whom he proposed to raise to the rank of Cæsar. Licinius opened secret negotiations with Bassianus through his brother Senecio, but the plot was discovered in time. Bassianus was executed, but Licinius refused to give up Senecio, and permitted his subjects to throw down the statues of Constantine, who quickly took the offensive (A.D. 314) and gained a hard-won victory at Cibalæ (Vincovce) which forced Licinius to retire beyond the Balkans. A second battle was fought between Philippopolis and Adrianople, and though the victory again rested with Constantine, it was far from decisive, and terms of peace were agreed to, by which Illyricum was ceded to Constantine and the two halves of the Empire became virtually independent. A semblance of unity indeed was preserved; Constantine and Licinius held the consulship in A.D. 315, and in A.D. 317 the two elder sons of Constantine, Crispus and Constantine II., together with Licinius' bastard, Licinianus, received the title of Cæsars, but it

was clear that no lasting peace was possible. Again Constantine waited, this time for nearly ten years, while he perfected his organisation and gained popularity at the expense of Licinius, who was a worthy successor of Galerius in violence and cruelty. In A.D. 315 Constantine celebrated his *decennalia* at Rome, and despoiled the monuments of Trajan and other Emperors to adorn the arch which still stands between the Colosseum and the Palatine.[1] In these years, too, he was more than once called upon to intervene in the domestic struggles of the Christian church. The first occasion was afforded by the Donatist schism, which arose from the election to the bishopric of Carthage of a priest who was believed to have surrendered the sacred books and vessels of his church to the inquisitors of Diocletian. Constantine at first referred the case to the bishop of Rome, and when his sentence failed to restore peace, presided at a council of Western bishops held at Arles to decide the dispute. As the schism still continued, Constantine retried the case at Milan (A.D. 316) and decided to uphold the claims of the Orthodox party by force and to expel the Donatists from their churches. These were the firstfruits of the alliance between church and state.

In A.D. 321 Licinius revoked his edict in favour of the Eastern Christians and subjected them to such persecution as he dared. The cause of this change

[1] I have endeavoured to show ("Papers of the British School at Rome," vol. iii.) that some of these sculptures had already been diverted from their ... ose and made to bear the portrait of Claudius ... e remembered) was claimed by Constantine ...

of policy may perhaps be sought in the fact that the church had refused to bow to his authority in the matter of the Arian controversy, which was soon to become the dominant question of the hour; but it also shows that the breach with Constantine was becoming gradually wider. Thus it was no matter for surprise when Licinius treated the action of Constantine in carrying operations against the Goths (who were threatening the Danube frontier) into his territories as a *casus belli*. Indeed, there could be no mistake as to the meaning of the preparations which had been made on both sides. Constantine had assembled a fleet of 200 battleships and 2,000 transports at Thessalonica, and had brought together a force of 120,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry; Licinius was stronger in numbers, with a fleet of 350 ships and an army of 150,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry, to concentrate which he had deprived the Eastern frontiers of their garrisons. The first battle was fought at Adrianople (July 3, A.D. 323 or 324—the date is disputed).[1] Licinius was defeated with heavy loss and sought refuge in Byzantium. But Constantine's son Crispus was victorious in a naval battle at Gallipoli and Licinius crossed the Bosphorus to Chalcedon. Constantine determined to waste no time in the siege of Byzantium and followed his enemy into Asia. At Chrysopolis (Scutari) the fate of the Empire was decided (September 18); Licinius fell

[1] The dating of some recently discovered Egy[illegible] accords better with the latter year (see *Compte[illegible] des Inscriptions*, 1906, p. 231 ff.).

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE

into the hands of Constantine, who spared his life for the moment and interned him at Thessalonica. Not long afterwards he was put to death on the charge of treasonable negotiation with the Gothic chiefs. The dreams of Constantine were realised at last.

The first task which lay before him was the restoration of peace in the church. In the matter of the Donatist schism, the question had been partly one of fact and partly one of morals, and it was not difficult to suggest and even to enforce a compromise. But Constantine, if he believed it possible to find as simple a solution for the problem raised by the Arian controversy, was soon undeceived. This is no place to discuss the details of the strife which was kindled by the preaching of Arius at Alexandria in A.D. 319; it will suffice to say that the question at issue was this—was the founder of Christianity creature or creator? Between these opposing views no true compromise was possible, and if the former seemed to accord better with the dictates of reason, faith refused to be satisfied save by the deeper mystery. In A.D. 325 Constantine presided over the sittings of the first council of the universal church at Nicæa, where the passionate enthusiasm of the deacon Athanasius won the first victory for the formula destined to ultimate triumph, which declared the Son to be of one Substance with the Father; but in spite of the anathema pronounced against all who yet maintained that "there was a time when He was not," and the election of Athanasius to the vacant see of Alexandria in A.D. 328, the dispossessed Arian bishops, notably the courtier Eusebius of Nicomedia,

succeeded in gaining the Emperor's ear, and in the closing years of Constantine's reign their party was in the ascendant. A synod summoned at Tyre to investigate certain charges against Athanasius found him guilty and pronounced sentence of death, which Constantine commuted to exile. Arius was re-admitted to communion by a council held at Jerusalem, and although, by a dramatic stroke of destiny, he died suddenly on the eve of the day fixed for his public triumph, Constantine refused to see the finger of God in this event, and on his death-bed received the sacrament of baptism at the hands of an Arian bishop.

The years 326–330 A.D. were made memorable by the foundation of the new capital which still preserves the name of Constantine. The motives which determined Constantine to remove the seat of government from Rome were manifold. It was befitting that the absolute monarchy of which he was the real founder should have for its capital a city of that founder's creation, where neither traditions nor monuments recalled a past in which he had no share. It was easier, too, for a Christian government to be established in a city which was not, as Rome was, the stronghold of lost causes and impossible beliefs. And above all, the geographical situation of Byzantium fitted it for the dwelling-place of rulers who were likely soon to be at death-grips with the numberless hordes of Northern barbarians that surged across the lower Danube and threatened to strike a blow at the heart of the Empire. Constantine is said to have hesitated in the

selection of a site and to have considered the claims of Serdica (Sofia), and even of Ilium, before his choice fell on Byzantium. The ancient city, which stood on the tongue of land washed by the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, formed but a small part of the new capital. Towards the close of A.D. 326 Constantine himself traced the outline of its walls, asserting that his footsteps were directed by an invisible guide. Four years later, on May 11, A.D. 330, the city was solemnly dedicated, as the ecclesiastical historians assert, to the Blessed Virgin. The truth of this statement has been doubted, and it has been urged that Constantine's Christianity was so far mixed with Paganism that he permitted his statue to be set up in the new capital with the attributes of the Sun-god; but this circumstance cannot outweigh the fact that heathen worships were excluded from Constantinople, and that the Emperor's last resting-place was in the church of the Holy Apostles.

In A.D. 326 Constantine celebrated his *viennalia* at Rome. The pomp and brilliance of the ceremony were, however, overshadowed by the mysterious tragedy which has left a dark blot upon the memory of the Emperor. His son Crispus, who was on his way from the East to Gaul, was suddenly arrested and put to death at Pola, in Istria. A few months later a like fate befel his stepmother, the Empress Fausta, and it was beyond doubt that these events were connected by some tragic link. The secret was never officially revealed, but gossip put its own interpretation on the facts. The popular, though not

the only theory was that Fausta had compassed the death of her stepson because he refused to become her lover, and that Constantine had learnt the truth when too late from the lips of his mother; but it rests on no definite evidence, and fails to account for the fact that, as the inscriptions show, no steps were ever taken to remove the stigma attaching to Crispus' memory.

The latter years of Constantine were not wholly untroubled. In A.D. 332 there was fighting on the Danube; the Sarmatians called in the aid of Rome against the Goths, and the Emperor's eldest surviving son, Constantine II., gained a great victory over the latter people on April 20th. Two years later, if we are to believe the historians, 300,000 Sarmatians were settled within the bounds of the Empire. In A.D. 335 there was a rebellion in Cyprus, which gave to Constantine the excuse he sought for the degradation and execution of the younger Licinius. In the same year a nominal partition of the Empire was carried out. The three sons of Constantine and Fausta—Constantine II., Constantius, and Constans—had at various times been raised to the rank of Cæsars. To these a fourth Cæsar was now added in the person of Delmatius, a nephew of the Emperor, and while the Gauls fell to the lot of Constantine II., Constantius received the East and Constans Italy; Delmatius was to be the ruler of the Balkan provinces,[1] but Constantine continued to

[1] As the number of Cæsars seemed to be constitutionally limited to four, Hannibalianus, the brother of Delmatius, was portioned off with the territory of Pontus and the title "King of Kings."

reign at Constantinople, and in fact showed no sign of parting with a tittle of his autocratic power. But the end was now near. In A.D. 337 Shapur II. of Persia declared war against Rome and overran Armenia and Mesopotamia. Constantine determined to take the field in person, but fell ill at Easter and died six weeks later at a suburb of Nicomedia. Not until death was close at hand was he admitted into the Christian church by the rite of baptism, which he received at the hands of the Arian bishop Eusebius, believing no doubt that he had thus made the best of both worlds.

It is not easy to trace in detail the administrative changes by which Constantine perfected the system of absolutism, which in its main lines was the work of Diocletian. Our chief source of evidence is the Code drawn up a century later by the order of Theodosius II., but the dating of the enactments contained therein is in many cases doubtful. More than three hundred, in any case, may be assigned to the reign of Constantine, but though their number suffices to show that a great outburst of legislative activity took place under his rule, their style as clearly proves that the scientific law-making which had been the boast of Imperial Rome was a lost art. Much of Constantine's legislation was of course due to his recognition of Christianity: we have laws which grant or confirm the privileges of the church and the clergy,[1]

[1] The most remarkable enactment of Constantine in favour of the church is the first of the so-called *Constitutiones Sirmondi* (not found in the Theodosian Code, but in a small independent collection of laws), which sets up episcopal tribunals, *from whose judgment there is no*

others directed against heretics, and not a few which show the influence of Christian morality upon the legislator. Yet even here the zeal which outruns discretion is seen in the severe and even savage penalties prescribed for offences against the moral code. On the other hand, a humane spirit breathes in the enactments which protect the prisoner from injustice and mitigate the sufferings of the slave.

But the vices of Diocletian's system were perpetuated and even enhanced in that of Constantine. If Diocletian had chastised the taxpayer with whips, Constantine plagued him with scorpions. It was popularly said that for the first ten years of his reign he was an excellent ruler, for the next ten a robber, and for the last ten a spendthrift; and the limitless sums which he lavished partly upon his favourites and partly upon the adornment of Constantinople were wrung from the subject populations with blood and tears. Under the system of requisitions (*annona*) explained above (p. 369), although the regular needs of the army and administration were supplied, the Imperial treasury lacked the gold and silver coin required for the largesses which had come to be a regular item in the soldiers' reward. To provide these fresh taxes were imposed—the *collatio glebalis*, charged upon the landed estates of senators, and the *collatio lustralis*, which was levied upon every form of trade and industry carried on in the towns. The name of this latter tax, which is derived from

appeal, in certain civil causes. Its genuineness has very naturally been called in question, but is accepted by many scholars of high authority.

the *lustrum* or period of five years intervening between each *census*, shows that it was nominally levied at fixed intervals, which would naturally coincide with the periodical commemorations of the Emperor's accession. But, as a matter of fact, excuses were constantly found—for example, the elevation of an Imperial prince to the rank of Cæsar and the anniversaries of such an event—for anticipating the natural term, and the burden of the tax was made still more oppressive by its irregularity. On such occasions, too, benevolences (*aurum oblaticium*) were exacted from the senatorial order.

Moreover, it was primarily in the interest of the treasury that the chains were finally riveted which bound each individual to the caste from which he sprang. It has already been explained how in the course of the third century the trade guilds were transformed from privileged bodies into corporations bound to the service of the state: the earliest laws of Constantine preserved in the Theodosian Code presuppose rather than enjoin the hereditary obligations of membership, so that in all likelihood the avenue of escape had been closed before the commencement of his reign (*cf.* p. 342). The extension of the principle was easy, and seemed to furnish a ready means of securing the regular flow of revenue into the coffers of the government. The municipal senators or *decuriones* were personally responsible for the due payment of the property tax due from the territories of their community, together with all unpaid arrears; and as the pressure of taxation waxed heavier, this liability spelt ruin for most of their number. Not only was exemp-

tion eagerly sought from the tenure of offices which had once been prized, but the *decuriones* came to prefer beggary and exile to their long-drawn misery, left what little property remained to them to be the prey of the tax-gatherer, and sought relief in flight, happy if they might enrol themselves in the legions or in the ranks of the Christian clergy. Moreover, since admission to the Senate or the official hierarchy brought with it release from municipal charges, and a like exemption was granted to time-expired soldiers who acquired property in land, the burden pressed with increasing weight on the shoulders of those who remained. It is not strange, therefore, that the tyrant Maxentius turned the decurionate into an instrument of religious persecution by imposing its burdens upon his Christian subjects, and Constantine made enrolment in the *curia* the recognised penalty for those sons of veterans who endeavoured by self-mutilation to escape their inherited obligation of military service. Nevertheless, there was a constant leakage from the ranks of the *decuriones*, and the Emperor was forced to issue a series of ordinances, of which the most important is dated A.D. 325, whose effect was to convert the *decuriones* into the hereditary bondsmen of the state. But though such laws might make life all but intolerable to the *decurio*, they were of no avail to arrest the economic process which was forcing land out of cultivation. As has been mentioned above (p. 273), the cultivators of the great estates (*coloni*) had fallen by degrees into a condition of economic servitude, and were only in a nominal sense free to change their condition; but in

spite of this they were driven by despair to abandon their source of livelihood and drifted into the towns, where they swelled the numbers of the proletariate. Thus when the assessment (*capitatio*) of lands and labour came to be reorganised, it was found that the number of "dead souls"—to borrow a term from Russian serfdom—was ever on the increase, and not even an omnipotent government could levy contributions on the product of non-existent labour. Hence in A.D. 332 Constantine enacted that the *coloni* should for ever be bound to the soil which they tilled, and a fresh social caste was created by a stroke of the pen.

It is the habit of despotism, whilst enchaining the lower ranks of its subjects in a rigorous and well-nigh intolerable bondage, to surround itself with an aristocracy devoted to its interest and freed from the crushing burdens laid upon the unprivileged classes. The system of Constantine formed no exception to this rule. But it was no longer in the ranks of the senatorial order that the aristocracy was to be found. The privileges of that order were more than counterbalanced by the load of taxation beneath which it groaned. It was the titles of *comes* (from which our "count" is descended) and "patrician" which raised the subjects of Constantine to the coveted position of immediate dependence on the person of the Emperor, and by conferring immunity from fiscal burdens made their holders the parasites instead of the victims of the new system.[1] Both were old names

[1] It was natural that under the new system fresh titles should be introduced to distinguish the grades of the official hierarchy. The

with a new meaning. The *comites* of the early Emperors were persons of rank attached to the Imperial staff on journeys or expeditions; but the title had fallen into disuse under the rule of the military Emperors of the third century. Under Constantine it reappears, at first with something of its old meaning, since the *comes* is expressly attached to the person of the Emperor or of one of the Cæsars; but ere long it is used merely as a mark of distinction which, when conferred upon an official such as a *dux* (p. 365), gives him precedence over his fellows. The holders of the highest posts in the Imperial service were always distinguished in this way. The prætorian prefects, indeed, were too exalted to gain in dignity by adding the title to their name, but it was borne by the holders of the two great military commands created by Constantine—the "Master of Horse" and "Master of Foot"—and by the commanders of the cavalry and infantry of the guard (*comes domesticorum equitum* and *c.d. peditum*); besides these there were four civil officials—the *quaestor*, or Chancellor of the Empire, the "Master of the Offices," whose jurisdiction embraced all persons in the government's service, the "Count of the Sacred Largesses" or finance minister, and the "Count (*i.e.*

epithets first employed under Marcus Aurelius (p. 220) continued in use, but with diminished value. Two new grades were added, the *viri illustres* and *viri spectabiles*, which comprised the higher officials and governors. The application of these titles was, however, only gradually reduced to a system. It would appear, for instance, that the epithet *illustris* was at first bestowed only on the *praefecti praetorio* and *praefecti urbi*, later (by Valentinian I.) on the chief military commanders, and finally on the four civil officials named in the text and the chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*).

Comptroller) of the Private Estate"—who ranked amongst the *comites*. The number of offices to which the title was regularly attached was always on the increase, and *comites* were also appointed from time to time to visit such provinces or dioceses as seemed to need special supervision and to report to the Emperor. In some parts of the Empire these officials became a permanent institution; thus a "Count of the East," whose functions were practically those of a viceroy, seems never to be wanting. Finally, the title becomes purely honorary, and counts of the first, second, and third order are distinguished; even before the close of Constantine's reign it was found necessary in the interests of the treasury to enact that the exemption from municipal burdens which the title carried with it should no longer be hereditary. The revived "patrician" dignity, on the other hand, was from the first a purely personal distinction, confined *de facto* to the chief personages of the court, but not attached to any office; it conferred the highest degree of social precedence, and being held for life only, stamped the new aristocracy as one based not on birth but on Imperial favour. The bitter fruits of Cæsarism were fully ripe.

XI

EPILOGUE

THE hopes of Constantine that by the division of the Empire an untroubled succession would be secured were not destined to be fulfilled. Within a few weeks of his death the troops quartered at Constantinople proclaimed that they would owe no obedience save to the sons of Constantine, and massacred his brothers, Delmatius and Julius Constantius, and nearly all their children; two boys, Gallus and Julian, alone survived. It is certain that Constantius, who was present in Constantinople, profited by these murders, and probable that he connived at them; he allowed the friends of the murdered Delmatius, including Ablabius, the prætorian prefect of the East, to be tried and executed for treason, and is said to have suffered from the terrors of remorse, intensified by superstition, until the day of his death. Not till the 3rd of September did the three brothers upon whom the government of the Empire devolved agree upon the division of its provinces and assume the style of Augusti. Nor was peace long maintained, for Constans, to whose share

fell Italy, the Danube provinces, and Africa, was attacked in A.D. 340 by his eldest brother, Constantine II., the ruler of Gaul and Spain. Constantine was, however, defeated and killed at Aquileia, and from henceforward Constans was the ruler of the Latin West; and although the brothers differed in their theological views and a serious breach took place in A.D. 345, the peace between them was never broken.

Constantius, indeed, was prevented from any active aggression against his brother's territories by the constant danger which threatened the Eastern frontier. Not only was the influence of Rome and, together with Rome, of Christianity in Armenia[1] at stake, but the Mesopotamian provinces of the Empire were exposed to the repeated attacks of the Persians under the strong rule of Shapur II. Constantius was no general, and the only victory which he gained in the field (at Singara, A.D. 348) was converted by carelessness into a signal defeat; he could do little but let loose the Bedawin of the Syrian desert against his enemies, and trust to the strength of the Roman fortresses, one of which, Nisibis, sustained three sieges through the heroism of its defenders. The raising of the third and last (A.D. 350), followed by a peace with Persia, was celebrated by the institution of a yearly festival, the Persian Games.

In the same year Constans, who, though a capable and energetic ruler, was unpopular with the army, and had made many enemies by his personal vices and favouritism, fell a victim to a military conspiracy

[1] Armenia had been converted by St. Gregory the Illuminator at the close of the third century.

headed by Magnus Magnentius, an officer of barbarian origin. In a few weeks Italy and the West acknowledged Magnentius as Emperor, and the central provinces were only saved by the action of the aged commander-in-chief of the army of the Danube, Vetranio, who, on the suggestion of Constantia, the Emperor's sister, assumed the purple himself rather than submit to the usurper.

Soon afterwards Nepotianus, a nephew of Constantine the Great, proclaimed himself Emperor in Italy, seized Rome at the head of a band of ruffians, and held the Capitol for a month against the troops of Magnentius. The crisis was grave, but Constantius was unable to leave the Eastern frontier until late in the year. Meantime Vetranio had been forced to make terms with Magnentius and to subscribe to his proposals for a partition of the Empire; but when Constantius entered Thrace in person, he left the passes of the Balkans unguarded and finally resigned the diadem into the hands of the Emperor in the presence of his army on December 25th, and passed his remaining years in honourable retirement. This left Magnentius and Constantius face to face. The former raised his brother Decentius to the rank of Cæsar and ordered him to protect the Rhine frontier from the invasion of the Germans whom Constantius is said to have called in to his aid; while the legitimate Emperor conferred a like rank on his cousin Gallus and assigned to him the task of carrying on the war with Persia. In A.D. 251 a campaign in the valley of the Save ended in the desperate battle of Mursa (September 28th), which was decided

in Constantius' favour by the mailed horsemen of the East; the following year saw the recovery of Italy and Africa, and finally, in A.D. 353, Constantius forced the passage of the Cottian Alps at Mons Seleuci and defeated the troops of Magnentius, who committed suicide at Lyons. A week later his brother followed his example.

Constantius now celebrated his *tricennalia* at Arles, and henceforth ruled over the undivided Empire of Constantine. His troubles, however, were not at an end. Gallus proved himself a vicious and tyrannical ruler, and when Constantine sent high officials to investigate his conduct, caused them to be arrested and put to death. But instead of making a bid for empire, he allowed himself to be entrapped into a journey Westwards, which of course ended with his imprisonment and execution (late in A.D. 354). He threw the blame for his misfeasance upon his wife, Constantina, the sister of Constantius, whom a contemporary historian describes as a fiend in human shape. In the following year the odious system of espionage by which Constantius' rule was maintained led to the rise of a fresh usurper in Claudius Silvanus, an officer of Frankish descent who commanded the army of the Rhine and was forced in self-defence to proclaim himself Emperor at Cologne. His rule was brief, for Ursicinus, whom Constantius had employed to entice Gallus to Italy, was equally successful in procuring the murder of Silvanus; but a fatal blow was dealt to Roman prestige in the North, and towards the close of A.D. 355 Cologne fell into the hands of the Frankish invaders. The outlook was

indeed gloomy, for the Sarmatians and Quadi were pressing on the line of the Danube and the Persians were once more active on the Eastern frontier, nor had Constantius designated any successor to the throne. His wife, Eusebia, now persuaded him to raise the younger brother of Gallus to the rank of Cæsar. This was Julian, who had passed some six years of boyhood in virtual exile at the lonely castle of Macellum in Cappadocia, and having ceased at heart to be a Christian, was now drinking deeply of Greek literature and philosophy as a student at the University of Athens. Hence he was summoned to Milan, to be (in his own words) "condemned to death in the purple," and was placed in command of Gaul and the West. Constantius was careful, however, to surround him with officials of experience, for he trusted no one, and (to do him justice) felt that the military situation was too grave to be dealt with by a mere University student on his sole responsibility. Julian naturally chafed under the restrictions placed upon his freedom of action, and more than suspected the loyalty of some of his officers. Moreover, he had never forgiven his cousin for the complicity which he attributed to him in the massacre of A.D. 337; but he did not allow such considerations to divert him from the path of duty and patriotism, and displayed in the campaigns which followed something of the military genius proper to a descendant of Constantine. He soon relieved Augustodunum (Autun), which had all but fallen into the hands of the Alamanni, and recovered Cologne from the Franks; but in the winter of A.D. 356–57 the German hordes

again overran Alsace and even besieged Julian in Sens. In A.D. 357 he took the field once more, but found his position compromised by the inefficiency, possibly even the treachery, of Barbatio, whom Constantius had ordered to advance northward from Switzerland; nevertheless, he retrieved the honour of Rome by a brilliant victory gained at Strassburg, where the Alamannic king Chnodomar was taken prisoner. The next two campaigns saw an advance beyond the Rhine and the devastation of the enemy's territory, while the defences of the river were set in order. In the winter Julian spent his time in Paris, devoting himself to the relief of the Gallic provinces from the crushing burdens of taxation and opposing a firm resistance to the financial agents of Constantius. It was small wonder that the young student, whose idealism did not desert him when called upon to play the parts of a general and a statesman, attained a popularity which filled his cousin with jealousy and suspicion. Constantius had visited Rome in A.D. 357, entering the city in a golden chariot and preserving the impassive, statuesque demeanour which seemed to his cramped and petty nature to befit the dignity of an absolute ruler, and while temporising with Persia had achieved some successes on the Danube (largely by employing the treachery which he mistook for statecraft) which served as an excuse for the assumption of the title *Sarmaticus;* but in A.D. 359 Shapur invaded Mesopotamia and took the fortress of Amida after a siege of seventy-three days, and in A.D. 360 followed up his success by the capture of Singara and Bezabde. Constantius had already

withdrawn seven regiments of infantry and two of cavalry from Gaul to reinforce his army, and at the opening of the second campaign a message was received at Paris, ordering the flower of the Gallic troops to be despatched to the East. Julian felt that they could ill be spared while the Germans were unconquered, and the officer destined for the command by Constantius was at the moment repelling a Pictish invasion of Britain. While he hesitated, the troops took the matter into their own hands and proclaimed him Augustus. To refuse meant death, to accept, civil war. Julian chose the latter course, but endeavoured to come to terms with his cousin. This was impossible; but a year passed before either Emperor was able to leave the frontiers. In A.D. 361 Julian marched Eastward, dividing his force into three columns, and was met in Thrace by the news that Constantius had died after a brief illness at Mopsucrene, in Cilicia.

Once more a philosopher was master of the world; but the reign of philosophy was over, and Julian, although he had saturated himself with Hellenic culture as it was taught in the Eastern Universities and paid a worship which was doubtless sincere to the gods of Greece, was sufficiently the child of his age to realise that the paganism which it was his ambition to restore could only hope to survive in the struggle with Christianity by borrowing its weapons. Maximinus Daia had endeavoured to copy the ecclesiastical machinery of the church: Julian's aim was to adapt to pagan use its liturgy and preaching, nay more, to graft on the syncretistic religion which

he professed the specific morality of the Christian, and even to encourage the ascetic practices which sorted ill with true Hellenism.

Such efforts were doomed to failure at the outset, and the pathetic spectacle of the Emperor's misdirected pietism excited nothing but derision. He was no persecutor, and professed universal toleration in religious matters, trusting that the position of Christianity would be undermined when it was found that a profession of paganism was the only road to Imperial favour. While careful, however, not to legislate directly against the Christians, he sought to combat Christianity by subtler methods, sowing dissension under the guise of enforced toleration by restoring deposed sectarian bishops, and enacting that pagans only should be permitted to lecture on the classics, a measure of far-reaching effect, since, as the ancient authors still formed the staple of instruction, the church was thus deprived of the control of education. In a few Eastern towns the pagan mob was encouraged to vent its spite on the Christians, and some blood was shed, but there was no systematic persecution.

But Julian had little time for religious controversy. It was necessary to settle accounts with Persia, and during the months which the Emperor spent at Antioch in the society of philosophers and rhetoricians and in quarrels with the inhabitants of that immoral city, to whom his puritan paganism was an object of contempt, preparations for war were pushed on. In A.D. 363 Julian marched along the Euphrates accompanied by a large flotilla to a spot within fifty

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.
(*Acerenza.*)

miles of Babylon and thence transferred his ships by an ancient canal to the Tigris. But instead of laying siege to the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, Julian destroyed his fleet and struck Eastwards, severing his communications and trusting to meet the Armenian force, which, together with some Roman troops, was advancing by the line of the Tigris. The decision was fatal. Marching through a country already devastated by the enemy, the army was soon reduced to desperate straits and constantly harassed by the Persians. At last, on the 26th of June, the Emperor received his death-wound in one of these encounters, and with him perished the house of Constantine and the last hope of paganism.

On the following day a handsome and popular officer of the guard, Jovian, was acclaimed as Emperor. The election was a rebuff to the barbarian element in the higher grades of the service; but the new Emperor was in no way fitted to rule, and was forced to conclude a humiliating peace with Persia, surrendering five provinces and several fortresses (including Nisibis) and leaving Armenia to its fate. Eight months later he was found dead in his bed. The choice of the army now fell on Valentinian, an officer of the guard, whose father, Gratian, a native of Cibalæ, in Pannonia, had risen from the ranks to the governorship of Britain. Valentinian at once grasped the reins of government firmly, and within a few weeks associated his brother Valens with himself and conferred upon him the title of Augustus (March 28, A.D. 364). In July of the same year the brothers carried out a

division of the Empire, in which the West, including the prefecture of Illyricum, *i.e.*, the upper Danube provinces, fell to the elder and the East to the younger. Their powers were in theory co-ordinate, but Valentinian was well aware that his ascendancy over his weaker brother would secure to him the practical supremacy which he was determined to exercise. The new dynasty was not, however, destined to be founded without bloodshed. In A.D. 365 Procopius, a connection by marriage of the house of Constantine, raised the standard of revolt at Constantinople whilst Valens was absent in Syria. Reckoning, not without reason, on the popularity of the fallen dynasty, he posed as the vindicator of the claims of Constantius' widow and daughter, whose persons he secured, and found some following amongst the troops. The higher officers, however, remained faithful to Valens, and in the decisive battle of Nacolia in Phrygia (Sidi-ghazi) Procopius was deserted by his followers, made prisoner, and at once executed (May 27, A.D. 366). His adherents were extirpated without mercy.

Henceforward the rule of the two brothers was never seriously threatened by internal rebellion. Religious strife burnt as fiercely as ever in the breasts of contending parties within the church; but the policy of toleration which Valentinian pursued in his own provinces gave full play to the forces which made for a final settlement of the great debate. It has been explained in a previous chapter (p. 389) that in spite of the decision of the Council of Nicæa in favour of the eternal pre-existence of the

Son and His equality with the Father in substance. Constantine ended his life an Arian, and Athanasius, together with other orthodox bishops, remained in exile. Throughout the reign of Constantius the great controversy raged with undiminished heat. Orthodoxy was strong in the Latin West, where the brothers of Constantius espoused its cause; the East, although divided, was on the whole inclined to Arianism in one or other of its protean forms, and Constantius was ultimately found on this side. In A.D. 338 the influence of the Western rulers brought about a general amnesty, and the orthodox bishops, Athanasius and the rest, returned to their sees. It is possible that the Arians would have ceased to disturb the peace of the church had they been admitted to communion by its rulers; but this concession the orthodox were determined to refuse to the uttermost. At Christmas a synod of Eastern bishops was assembled at Antioch, and its tone was from the first unfavourable to Athanasius; fresh charges against him were heard, and a bishop was appointed for the Arian community of Alexandria. These decisions were notified both to the Emperors and to Julius, the bishop of Rome. But Athanasius summoned eighty Egyptian bishops to a synod at Alexandria, and, fortified by this support, made a counter-appeal to the Pope. Soon he was forced to fly from Alexandria, where Gregory of Cappadocia, who had been appointed to the see by the synod of Antioch when the news of Athanasius' contumacy was received, was installed in his place by the aid of the government. Julius received the exile with

honour, admitted him to communion, and finding his decision unacceptable to the synod of Antioch, caused it to be ratified by an assembly of Western bishops.

In A.D. 340 the death of Constantine II. left Constans in sole control of the West, and his influence was strongly exerted on behalf of orthodoxy. On the death of Eusebius, who had been translated from the see of Nicomedia (p. 388) to that of Constantinople, the struggle between the orthodox party, whose candidate was Paulus, and the Arians, headed by Macedonius, led to rioting and bloodshed; and Constans had little difficulty in inducing his brother to consent to the summoning of a general council of the church at Serdica in A.D. 343. About 170 bishops here assembled, and it was evident that the West was almost wholly on the side of Athanasius, while the East with equal unanimity favoured his opponents. The supporters of Athanasius, about ninety in number, formed a small majority; the minority of eighty declined to take any part in the proceedings of the council, or even to hold communion with their opponents. Athanasius was therefore triumphantly acquitted of all the charges brought against him, and the restoration of all the orthodox Eastern bishops to their sees was decreed. It was not, indeed, an easy task to carry this decision into effect, especially against the wishes of Constantius; but the influence of Constans at length prevailed, and in A.D. 345 Athanasius was reinstated at Alexandria, Gregory of Cappadocia having recently died.

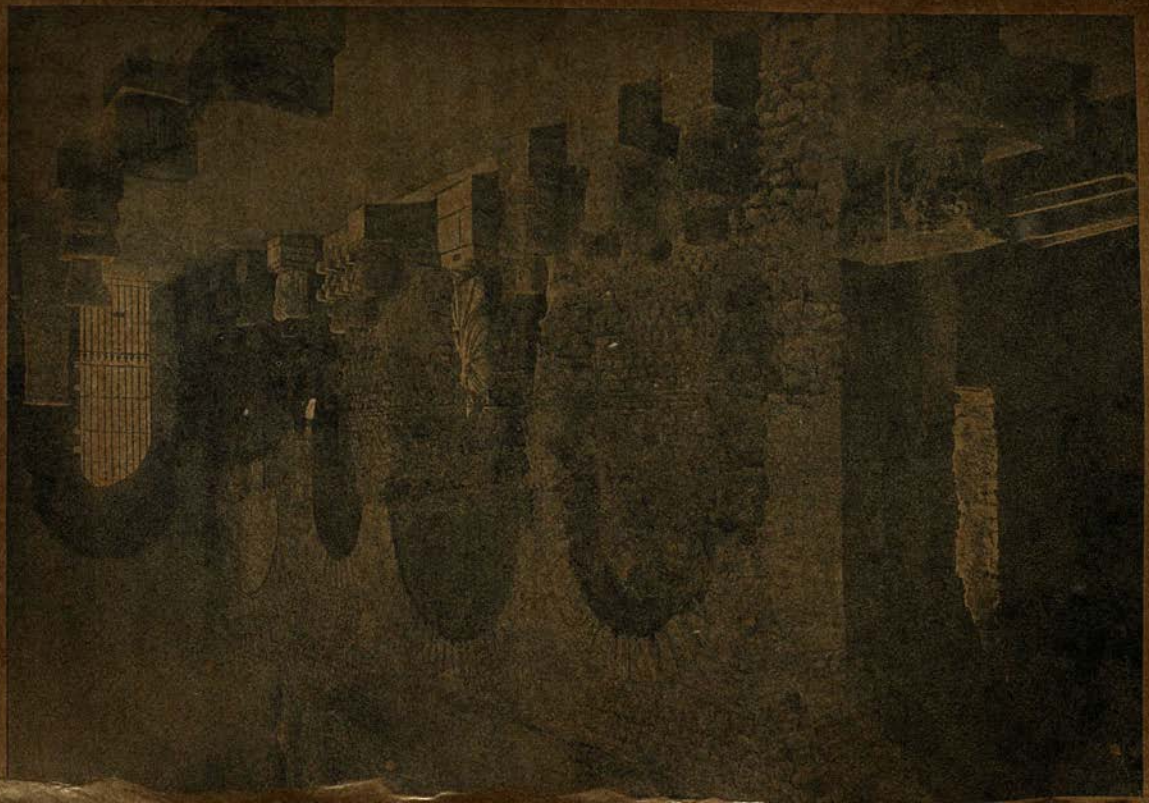
There could, however, be no lasting peace so long as both parties remained within the church, and as soon as the civil war between Constantius and Magnentius was over, the enemies of Athanasius once more gained the ear of the Emperor. In A.D. 352 Liberius had succeeded Julius as bishop of Rome, and though he had been at first induced to summon Athanasius to appear before his tribunal and there reply to the charges brought against him, he soon changed his mind and became his most ardent supporter. Constantius, however, was determined to have his way. He first procured the condemnation of Athanasius by a synod at Arles (A.D. 353) and then, in response to the appeal of the Pope, summoned a general council at Milan for A.D. 355. This was attended by about 300 bishops, from whom the Emperor extorted a verdict condemning Athanasius on the charge of magic and depriving him of his bishopric. Liberius refused to accept the sentence of the council, and though summoned to the Emperor's presence, remained obdurate; he was accordingly banished to Macedonia. In A.D. 356 Athanasius was at length deposed by military force, and fled to the deserts of the Thebaid, while an anti-Pope, Felix II., was set up in Rome.

Hitherto the disciplinary question of Athanasius' conduct had been foremost amongst the causes of dispute; but all the world knew that the momentous issues of belief which underlay the division of parties remained to be decided. Constantius was determined to force upon the church a creed which

would enable the Arians to enjoy communion, if not to exercise a predominant influence, and a council was assembled at Sirmium in A.D. 357 which accepted a formula designed to achieve comprehension by sacrificing definition. It forbade the faithful to use either the term ὁμοούσιος (of *one* substance) or ὁμοιούσιος (of *like* substance) in describing the relation of the Son to the Father, which was to be regarded as an ineffable and insoluble mystery. The new creed was joyfully subscribed in the East, especially by the more extreme Arians known as Ἀνόμοιοι, who held that the Son was of "unlike" substance to the Father, but it failed to secure acceptance in the West, although Liberius, weary of his exile, submitted as the price of his restoration in A.D. 358. But Constantius was still unsatisfied, and in A.D. 359 the bishops of West and East were summoned to meet simultaneously at Ariminum (Rimini) and Seleucia. The decision of the East was of course a foregone conclusion; it was all-important to secure the agreement of the West. At first this seemed unattainable, for an overwhelming majority of the 400 bishops assembled at Rimini were orthodox, and declined to accept the creed without the addition of anathemas against the doctrine of Arius and other sectaries; they even went so far as to excommunicate Valens, the Arian bishop of Mursa, who had rendered services to Constantius in the war with Magnentius which the Emperor was slow to forget. Constantius resolved to compel the council to rescind its decision, and practically

starved it into submission. A formula agreeable to the council of Seleucia was forced upon the unwilling bishops, and the use of the term "substance" and its derivatives was entirely forbidden. Thus the orthodox doctrine, if held as a pious opinion, might not be publicly preached, and Arianism basked in the sunshine of Imperial favour.

Julian, as we have already seen, tolerated sectarianism in the church which he despised in order to sow seeds of dissension and weakness; Valentinian, though personally orthodox, had no interest in dogmatic questions, and allowed free play to the forces which were shaping the doctrines of the Catholic church. An Arian bishop continued to hold the see of Milan until A.D. 374, when the voice of the people compelled a popular official, though as yet unbaptized, to assume the episcopal office. This was Ambrose, the greatest statesman of the Western church, whose election sealed the doom of Arianism. Athanasius had died in the previous year. On the death of his enemy Constantius, he had been recalled in triumph to Alexandria, where the populace rose and murdered the Arian bishop, George of Cappadocia; but his triumph was short-lived, for Julian once more drove him into exile, and it was not until the death of the pagan Emperor that he finally entered into undisturbed possession of his see. Valens was by conviction an Arian; and though, in deference to his brother's authority, he at first pursued a policy of toleration, after the death of Athanasius he



commenced a more or less active persecution of the orthodox believers. Furthermore, he earned the hatred of the church by his legislation against monasticism, which was now attracting its thousands to the sandy wastes of Upper Egypt—not only those who found in it the realisation of that ascetic ideal of detachment from the world for which the religion and philosophy of the East had so long been seeking, but also a goodly number of the victims of official tyranny, to whom the hermit's cell offered the only refuge from the scourge and the rack. For such the Imperial government naturally felt no sympathy, and they were remorselessly hunted out and compelled to fulfil their obligations to the state.

In the West the growing importance of the bishop of Rome foreshadowed the creation of a spiritual dominion which should outlast the Empire. The struggle between Felix and Liberius (p. 412) had been ended by the death of the former in A.D. 358; and Liberius had held the see of Rome until his demise in A.D. 366. Then strife broke out afresh, and the partisans of Damasus and Ursinus waged civil war in the streets and churches of the city, whilst the prefect, who represented the Imperial authority, was forced to look on helpless. Damasus, a militant churchman, a man of the world, and a mediocre poet, proved victorious, and was not merely confirmed by Valentinian in the tenure of his spiritual office, but also received an extension of his judicial authority. The old pagan aristocracy still clung gallantly to the strongholds of a lost cause; but even the bravery of their outward show

was eclipsed by the growing magnificence of the papal court.

The government of Valentinian and Valens was neither unjust nor unenlightened according to the standard of the time, and something, though little enough, was done to lighten the load under which the subject populations groaned. They set up in the cities of the Empire "protectors of the community" (*defensores civitatis*), whose duty it was to shield the weak from the oppression and rapacity of the strong; for the old-established Imperial commissioners (p. 168) had long lost all influence, and self-help had become extinct together with political freedom. For a time these champions of the oppressed may have been able to exercise some slight control over the greedy mob of officials; but they soon became the tools of the administration, and, indeed, there was something almost ludicrous in the conception of a government which took measures to protect its subjects against itself. Perhaps the only effective check upon the tyranny of the mighty was imposed by the church and its bishops, whose authority was steadily growing. Some attempt was made, however, by legislation to check the evils inherent in bureaucratic despotism; for example, it was forbidden to any official to acquire estates, whether by gift or purchase, in the province where he was stationed; and the Theodosian Code contains a series of enactments dating from this period whose aim is to remedy abuses connected with the assessment and collection of taxes, and to protect the cultivators of the soil against exactions. Unfortunately, Valentinian,

however well-intentioned, was not in the least fitted to govern an Empire, for he had not learnt to govern himself. His outbursts of wrath were terrible in their effects. A huntsman was flogged to death because he let loose a hound before the time; a groom was sentenced to lose his right hand for clumsiness in assisting the Emperor to mount. Ammianus tells the almost incredible tale of two bears whom Valentinian fed on human flesh. Nor was his cruelty shown only to menials. Hearing that certain state-debtors had no property upon which a distraint could be levied, he ordered their execution. For a trifling offence it was decreed that three municipal senators in a number of towns should be put to death. Sometimes, no doubt, the victims of his wrath were extortionate officials who richly deserved their fate; but the interests of justice are never served by haphazard severity, and Valentinian, who was nothing but a soldier, was a tool in the hands of sycophants and courtiers, and the most crying injustice might go unpunished where his personal control was lacking. This was especially the case in the African provinces, where the count of Africa, Romanus, drained the life-blood of the provincials by intolerable extortions. He secured in Remigius, the Master of the Offices, an all-powerful protector, who terrorised the envoys sent by the Africans and turned their curses into blessings, and when a special commissioner, Palladius, was sent to inquire into his conduct, forced him by threats of denunciation to share his crimes. At length the rebel Firmus, a Moorish sheikh, was hailed as a

delivered by the miserable provincials, and overran the greater part of North Africa. The just and able general, Theodosius,[1] who was despatched to restore the prestige of Rome, succeeded in crushing Firmus; but although he did his best to enlighten Valentinian as to the true state of affairs, and even brought about the fall of Remigius and Palladius, Romanus went unpunished, and after the Emperor's death the court cabal actually compassed the death of Theodosius by accusing him of treasonable designs. The worst enemies of Rome were indeed those of her own household.

All this while the waves of Germanic invasion were beating ominously, if fitfully, upon the Northern frontiers. In the East the Gothic people were advancing in civilisation and in the consciousness of power. Part of them had embraced Arian Christianity, and their bishop, Ulfilas, had translated the Scriptures into their native tongue. The king of the Ostrogoths, Hermanric by name, had built up a great power in Southern Russia; but it was with the Western branch of the nation, whose leader, Athanaric, bore the title of "judge," that the Romans were immediately concerned. The usurper Procopius enlisted the support of the Goths, who streamed in thousands across the Danube in A.D. 366, but were forced by Victor, the general of Valens, to lay down their arms, and were settled as military colonists in

[1] He had won great distinction by restoring Imperial authority in Britain, where discontent amongst the overtaxed provincials and disaffection in the underpaid garrisons had reduced the island to a state of anarchy, and exposed it to the incursions of Scottish barbarians and Saxon pirates.

Thrace. Athanaric demanded their repatriation, and when this was refused a war broke out, which was ended after three years by a conference held on board a ship moored in mid-Danube; the meeting-place was chosen in order that the oath sworn by the Gothic leader that he would never set foot on Roman soil might not be violated. He was now compelled to give hostages for his good behaviour, and retired to vent his wrath by persecuting his Christian subjects.

In the West the Alamanni gave serious trouble to Valentinian. In A.D. 366 they ravaged Eastern Gaul, but were defeated by Jovinus, the *magister militum*. Two years later they succeeded in capturing Moguntiacum (Mainz), and Valentinian, who had invested his eight-year-old son, Gratian, with the purple in A.D. 367, as a third Augustus, took the field with the young prince, and marching up the valley of the Neckar, defeated the enemy with great slaughter in the Black Forest. But the Emperor saw that a vigorous offensive, though it might relieve the pressure for a time, offered no guarantee of lasting security. He repaired the permanent defences of the Rhine, and built the new fortress of Basileia, the modern Basel. He likewise endeavoured to weaken his enemies by calling in their hereditary foes, the Burgundians, to his aid, but incurred the deep hostility of his new allies by refusing them the supplies which he had promised. Peace was, notwithstanding, restored in A.D. 370, and many of the Germans joined the standard of Rome or were settled within the borders of the Empire.

In A.D. 374 the provinces on the upper Danube were threatened by an incursion of Quadi and Sarmatians; the prætorian prefect of Illyricum procured the murder of the king of the Quadi, and the Sarmatians were defeated by Theodosius the younger, son of the general already mentioned (p. 419); but a fresh invasion was threatened, and in A.D. 375 Valentinian restored the great fortress of Carnuntum, crossed the Danube, and ravaged the enemy's territories. Late in the year he held a conference with the envoys of the Quadi at Brigetio (O-Szöny) and in one of his fits of uncontrollable passion burst a blood-vessel and died (November 17th). It was a critical moment, for Gratian, an unwarlike youth of sixteen, was some hundreds of miles away at Trèves, and it was proposed to make Sebastianus, a commander of Roman descent, joint Emperor of the West. But the German faction amongst the staff officers hastily summoned the Emperor's second wife Justina and her four-year-old son, Valentinian II., who was proclaimed Augustus by the assembled army. The fall of Theodosius the elder, already referred to (p. 419), was no doubt connected with these intrigues.

Gratian perforce recognised his half-brother as co-regent, but refused to agree to a partition of the Western Empire, which would have exposed him to grave danger of a military rising in the camp of Valentinian II. Valens was now the senior ruler of the Empire; but it was vain to look to him for guidance, for the most terrible storm which had yet broken over Rome was brewing in the East.

From the steppes of Asia countless swarms of Huns, who, whether or no we identify them with the Hiung-nu of the Chinese annals, were certainly of Mongol race, began to press Westwards about A.D. 370. The Alans were the first to submit to their advance; then the Ostrogothic kingdom of Hermanric crumbled at their approach, and its ruler was driven to suicide; at length, in A.D. 375, the Visigoths were threatened with extinction. Athanaric, defeated in open battle, took refuge behind the Carpathians, while the bulk of his people, 200,000 in number, sought safety in Roman territory and offered to defend the Danube frontier as the price of settlement. Valens was engaged in war with Persia, and ordered his commanders in Thrace, Lupicinus and Maximus, to insist on the disarmament of the Gothic host. Not only did they fail to enforce the condition, but Lupicinus endeavoured by the basest treachery to compass the murder of the Gothic leaders at a banquet. The plot failed, and the Goths, led by Fritigern, devastated the lands of Thrace, and fought an indecisive battle with the generals of Valens (A.D. 377). Fresh hordes of barbarians now swarmed across the Danube, and Valens was summoned from the East to take the field in person. Gratian, too, set out for the Balkans, but was delayed by a raid of the Alamanni into Switzerland, and his uncle determined to achieve for himself the glory of crushing the enemies of Rome. But fate had willed otherwise, for on the 9th of August, A.D. 378, the Roman legions, parched with thirst and worn out with fatigue, fell an easy prey to the Goths at Adrianople.

The cavalry fled, the infantry was cut to pieces, and the Emperor perished; his body was never found, and various tales were told about his end.

The disaster to Roman prestige was, of course, irreparable; but the undisciplined bravery of the Goths could make no impression on the Roman fortresses, and a breathing-space was given to the Empire. Gratian retreated westwards and sought for a saviour of the State. He was found in the younger Theodosius, who had retired to his native province of Spain after his father's death, and was now summoned from his retreat and installed as Augustus (January 19, A.D. 379). He was the last Emperor of Rome to be numbered with that small band whom the world calls Great; and beside the puny rulers who followed him he was great indeed, though in historical importance he cannot rank with most of those who have borne the title. Nevertheless, he averted for a time the impending doom of the Western Empire, and did much to bring about the peaceful fusion of Roman and barbarian which saved order and civilisation from wanton destruction. Making his headquarters at Thessalonica, he slowly but surely reconquered the Balkan lands. Modar, a Christian Goth, was placed in command against his countrymen, and justified the confidence of Theodosius by capturing a *laager* of four thousand wagons. The Frankish generals, Bauto and Arbogast, were sent by Gratian with their corps to the East, and forced the Goths northwards. At length, in A.D. 381, they craved peace; Athanaric, forgetting his ancient oath, came to Constantinople, and when

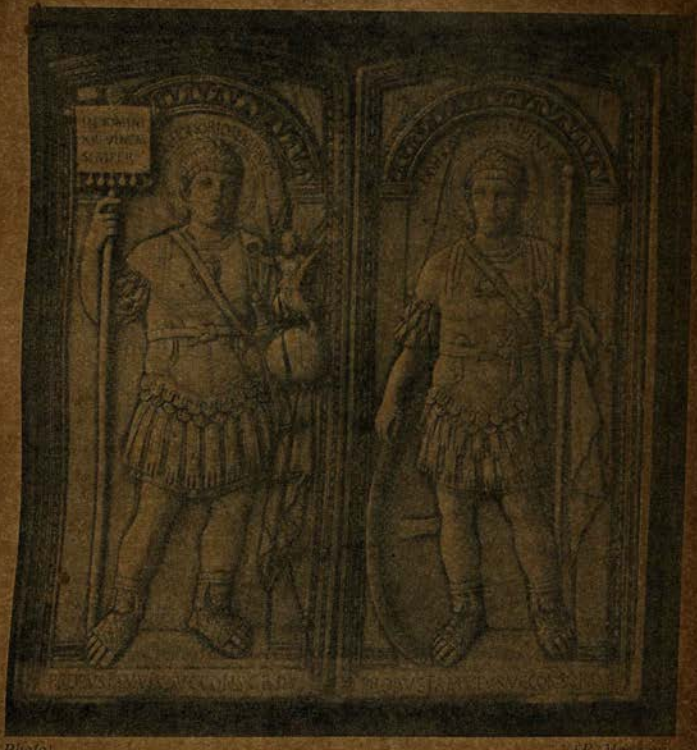
he saw its splendour, did homage to the "God upon earth" who sat there enthroned. In A.D. 382 the Visigoths obtained the settlement which they had so long demanded, and a privileged position, as "allied troops" (*fœderati*) of Rome, living their national life under their own rulers, but fighting under Roman commanders in time of war. The growing weakness of Rome's assimilative power stood confessed, but the Empire was saved for the time.

Meantime Gratian, a weak and pleasure-loving youth, was losing the respect of his Western subjects, and above all of the army. He fell under the dominion of the Frank Merobaudes, and the anti-German party at the court and in the army resolved to compass his downfall. In A.D. 383 a usurper, Magnus Maximus, was proclaimed Emperor in Britain and crossed the Channel. Gratian was murdered on August 25th by his own troops, and Gaul and Spain passed under the control of Maximus, who, tempering his ambition with caution, left the boy Valentinian II. unmolested in Italy, and secured the recognition of Theodosius. The hollow truce lasted for four years, during which Maximus sought the valuable support of the Catholic church by his severe persecution of the Arians, to whose party Valentinian II. and his mother adhered. In A.D. 387 the blow was struck. Maximus outwitted the generals of Valentinian, crossed the Alps, and descended upon Milan. Valentinian and his mother barely escaped the invaders, and took refuge with Theodosius at Thessalonica. The greater part of a year was spent in preparations for war; then the

advance began and the army of Maximus was forced back along the Save and over the Austrian Alps to Aquileia, which fell on July 28, A.D. 388. Maximus was taken and put to death, but his adherents were pardoned, and Theodosius reaped the fruits of his clemency when his general, Arbogast, recovered Gaul and the West almost without striking a blow. Theodosius spent three years in Italy, and when he again turned Eastwards, in A.D. 391, Valentinian went to Gaul. But Arbogast was resolved not to surrender the power which he had enjoyed since his victory, and on May 15, A.D. 392, Valentinian was murdered at Vienne, doubtless with his connivance. Arbogast had the West at his mercy; but the time had not yet come when a German could assume the Imperial title, and he preferred to set up a puppet Emperor in the person of the rhetorician Eugenius, his secretary and Master of the Offices. Eugenius was a pagan and secured the support of the Roman Senate, where a small but cultured clique still practised with fervent devotion the ancient worships, by restoring the symbols of the dying creed. But his triumph was short-lived. In A.D. 394 Theodosius set out on his last campaign. Eleven years before he had conferred on his eldest son, Arcadius, then six years old, the title of Augustus. Arcadius was left at Constantinople with the prætorian prefect, Rufinus, as his adviser; his younger brother, Honorius, was likewise proclaimed Augustus in A.D. 393, and destined to rule the West. The issue of the campaign was determined by the battle of the Frigidus ("Cold River") in Carniola, which lasted for

two days (September 5th and 6th), and was at length decided in Theodosius' favour by the treachery of Eugenius' troops. Eugenius was executed. Arbogast fled, but soon after committed suicide. The triumph of Theodosius was final and complete, but four months later he died at Milan (January 17, A.D. 395), having committed Honorius to the care of his most trusted general, the Vandal Stilicho.

The reign of Theodosius was marked by the triumph of orthodox Christianity and the final breach of the Empire with the pagan cult. Gratian was a firm adherent of the creed of Nicæa, and the first Emperor who refused on his accession to wear the robes or bear the title of chief pontiff, which Constantine had retained and interpreted as conferring on him the supreme headship of the church. Theodosius, when he lay sick unto death, as it seemed, at Thessalonica in A.D. 380, received the sacrament of baptism at the hands of the orthodox bishop Acholius, and on his recovery set himself with characteristic directness of aim to impose his own creed upon the Empire. The time was ripe for such a measure. Arianism was fast dying out in the West, and in the East the spasmodic persecutions of Valens had not availed to stem the growth of orthodoxy under the influence of such teachers as St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Theodosius deposed the Arian patriarch of Constantinople, Damophilus, and summoned thither a synod of 150 bishops, which ranked as the Second General Council of the church and gave to it the modified recension of the Nicene creed which the church still



Photo] [*R. Mas, Jun.*

DIPTYCH WITH PORTRAITS OF HONORIUS.
(A.D. 406.)

recites. In the course of the next ten years a number of enactments were issued both in the East and West which prohibited both pagan and heretical worship, though their severity was subject in practice to varying degrees of mitigation. Gratian confiscated the endowments of the pagan temples, the college of Vestal Virgins, and other bodies, and removed the altar of Victory from the Senate-house, disregarding the eloquent and pathetic protests of the pagan aristocracy, whose leader, Symmachus, vainly urged that "not by one path alone can the Great Mystery be approached." In the matter of religion Gratian and Theodosius alike were dominated by the powerful personality of St. Ambrose, the first of those great churchmen of whom it may be said that the thirst for spiritual dominion burns the more intensely where the fires of human passion have been quenched. In A.D. 385 he refused the Arian Empress Justina the use of a church within the walls of Milan, and in A.D. 390 Theodosius himself was humbled in the dust. A sedition had broken out at Thessalonica and the commandant of the garrison, Botheric, had been lynched by the mob. Theodosius, in an outburst of ungovernable fury, ordered an indiscriminate massacre of the citizens, in which 7,000, or, according to some accounts, 15,000 persons perished. Against this wanton butchery St. Ambrose alone raised his voice. For eight months he refused the Emperor an entrance into his cathedral, and at length, after he had done public penance, granted him absolution at the festival of the Nativity and restored him

to communion with the militant and triumphant church.

It was therefore a Christian Empire which confronted the incoming barbarians of the North; and that Empire was itself becoming increasingly barbaric. The character of its government was essentially military. Consuls and prætorian prefects enjoyed to the full the distinctions of pomp and title; but the real power lay in the hands of the generals, and nearly all of them were now drawn from the ranks of the barbarians. Amongst the marshals who followed Theodosius on his last march to Italy were the Vandal Stilicho and the Goths Gainas, Saul, and Bacurius; and a Gothic corps was commanded by Alaric, soon destined to enter Rome as a conqueror. Theodosius had increased the number of high commands in the army. It will be remembered that Constantine had created a master of foot and master of horse as the chiefs of the field army and of the Imperial staff; the latter title was conferred by his successors on the commanders of independent districts, notably in Gaul, where the institution of a local master of horse became permanent. Theodosius, in his administration of the East, combined the offices of master of foot and master of horse in one (*magister utriusque militiae*); two of these marshals were attached to his staff, while three others had independent districts (the East, Thrace, and Illyricum). In the West the old system survived for a few years, but the reign of the young and unwarlike Emperors at Milan called for the effective supremacy of a commander-in-chief,

and from the accession of Honorius in A.D. 395 a single master of soldiery regularly controls the forces of the West. Such *generalissimi* were as a matter of course raised to the patriciate; and in the fifth century the holder of the post came to be called "the Patrician" *par excellence*; thus by a strange irony of fate the barbarians who put an end to the rule of Rome bore a title which recalled the beginnings of the Eternal City. With the accession of Arcadius and Honorius begins the sorry tale of Rome's last agony. The severance of East and West was final. Arcadius was ruled by his prætorian prefect Rufinus, whose ambition was equalled by his avarice; in the background was the eunuch Eutropius, who held the office of chamberlain and secured a hold upon the Emperor by marrying the youth to Eudoxia, daughter of the Frankish general, Bauto. The peace of the Empire was soon broken. In the East the Huns poured through the "Caspian Gates" into the Caucasus and Mesopotamia, and devastated Syria and Asia Minor. Nearer home the Visigoths under Alaric, who had demanded the office of master of soldiery and met with refusal, revolted and spread desolation in Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly. Some said that Rufinus was privy to Alaric's rebellion; at any rate, when Stilicho led the Western armies into Greece and checked the advance of the Goths, Rufinus peremptorily ordered him to withdraw in the name of his master. Stilicho yielded, but took a bloody revenge; for the Eastern corps, returning to Constantinople, tore Rufinus in pieces in the presence of Arcadius, and it is prac-

tically certain that the murder was brought about by the intrigues of his Western rival.

The record of the years that follow has no lack of dramatic events, but the motives of those who made history are hard to unravel. The panegyrics of Claudian, the last Latin poet who retained something of classical form, tell us much of his patron Stilicho, but are of course strongly biassed. A curious *roman à clef*, the work of Synesius, bishop of Cyrene, pictures the intrigues of the Byzantine court, and shows that an undercurrent of hostility between Roman and barbarian was at work throughout. After the withdrawal of Stilicho, who had probably made terms with Alaric, the Gothic leader received the coveted title of "master of soldiery in Illyricum" and ceased for the time to trouble the peace of Rome. Stilicho's energies were devoted to the suppression of a grave rebellion in Africa, headed by Gildo, brother of the Moorish prince Firmus (p. 418). Gildo threatened Italy with famine by withdrawing the supply of corn; but his own brother Mascezel was despatched in command of a fleet, and speedily crushed the revolt. In A.D. 395 Stilicho became the father-in-law of the Emperor Honorius, and for some years practically ruled the West. At Constantinople the eunuch Eutropius succeeded Rufinus as favourite. In A.D. 399 he was proclaimed consul in the East—the West refused to recognise him—and soon afterwards became Patrician. But this patent degradation of the majesty of Rome soon met with its end. Gainas, the commander of the Gothic troops in the East,

resolved to rid the court of the hated eunuch. He was sent to suppress a revolt of Gothic settlers whom Theodosius had planted in Phrygia, but made common cause with their leader Tribigild, and demanded (amongst other things) the surrender of Eutropius. The eunuch took sanctuary beneath the high altar of the church of St. Sophia, and there listened to a sermon by the eloquent St. John Chrysostom (the "golden-mouthed") upon the text "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The patriarch interceded for the fallen favourite, and he received a promise that his life would be spared, but this was soon broken. Gainas and his Goths enjoyed a brief triumph; but when after some months of tortuous intrigue they were on the point of leaving the city, about 7,000 of them were massacred in a tumult, and Gainas fled beyond the Danube, where he met his death at the hands of the Huns (A.D. 400).

With the new century began the irresistible onrush of the barbarians. Alaric, who had perhaps made some bargain with Stilicho the terms of which had not been carried out, invaded Italy in the winter of A.D. 401–2. On Easter Day, April 6, A.D. 402, a battle was fought at Pollentia which, if it was not a decisive victory for Rome, at least checked the advance of the Goths. Milan was no safe place for Honorius, who cared for nothing but poultry-breeding, and the Imperial court was transferred to a place of security in the marshes of Ravenna. Stilicho, we know not how, procured the withdrawal of Alaric and secured a brief respite from the attacks of the Visigoths, which was sorely needed. From the

North an enormous host of Germans under Radagaisus poured into Italy, but were defeated and cut to pieces. In A.D. 406 the British legions revolted, and after slaying two successive pretenders left the island, never to return, and crossed into Gaul under the leadership of the "tyrant Constantine" in A.D. 407. At the same time the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi crossed the Rhine, and Gaul was never again ruled as a whole by the Western Emperors. Meanwhile Stilicho, as it seems, was intriguing with Alaric and preparing to strike a blow at the Eastern Empire. Possibly he wished to carve out a kingdom for his son Eucherius. But he had made many enemies, and when Arcadius died in A.D. 408 and Stilicho proposed to set the affairs of the East in order, they gained the ear of Honorius, and on August 23 Stilicho was put to death. Treacherous and self-seeking as he was, he and he alone could keep Alaric at bay. For the second time the king of the Visigoths entered Italy, and replied to a monk who dissuaded him from marching against the Eternal City that a divine voice was summoning him to Rome.

At Ravenna favourites rose and fell, and fruitless negotiations with Alaric were ended by the refusal of Honorius to grant his demands. Three times the Visigoth laid siege to Rome. Twice its inhabitants came to terms with the invader; the second time they submitted to the rule of the prefect of the city, Attalus, whom Alaric proclaimed Emperor. He was the last pagan who wore the purple. But in A.D. 410 Alaric deposed his nominee, and for the

third time marched on Rome, which was sacked by the Goths, just eight hundred years after its pillage by the Gauls. Thence Alaric marched Southwards, intending to bring Africa under his rule, but died at Consentia and was laid with his spoil in the bed of the river Busentus. The place of his burial has yet to be discovered; even the captives who dug his grave were slain, that the secret might not be revealed.

Meanwhile the dismemberment of the Western Empire made rapid progress. In A.D. 408 Constantine, whose capital was at Arles, crossed the Pyrenees and occupied Spain, soon followed by the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans. The confused struggles of the next few years need not here be recounted in detail. Usurpers ruled not only at Arles but at Tarragona, at Mainz, and at Carthage, and it seemed as though the last hour of the Western Empire had struck. However, Constantius, the commander-in-chief of Honorius' forces, besieged and took Arles; Constantine and his son surrendered on terms, but were put to death by Honorius' orders (A.D. 411). In A.D. 412 Athaulf, the brother-in-law and successor of Alaric, marched Northwards with the Goths, bearing in his train the princess Placidia, who had been captured in Rome. His aims have been recorded in memorable words. At first, he said, he desired to blot out the Roman name and turn "Romania" into "Gothia," but he learnt by experience that the Goths would never submit to law, which alone makes a state, and resolved that Gothic vigour should reanimate the Empire of Rome.

With this end in view, he sought the friendship of Honorius and the hand of Placidia; but though the treacherous and cowardly Emperor gladly used him to procure the downfall of the usurper Jovinus, he failed to fulfil the terms of his compact, and Athaulf then married Placidia without awaiting her brother's consent; but the Emperor still refused his friendship, and Athaulf reinvested Attalus, who had just composed a bridal ode for the marriage and had conducted the orchestra in person, with the Imperial purple. Honorius now sent Constantius to Gaul for the second time. He established his headquarters at Arles, and gradually forced the Visigoths to retreat westwards till in A.D. 415 they crossed the Pyrenees. In the same year Attalus fell into his hands, and in A.D. 416 Athaulf was murdered by a slave: with his dying breath he bade his brother restore Placidia to the Romans and be at peace with them. Singeric seized the throne, but was murdered after seven days, and Wallia became king of the Visigoths. He came to terms with Constantius, gave up Placidia, and agreed to fight against the barbarians in Spain. In A.D. 419 the Visigothic kingdom in south-western France was recognised as a vassal state, and the partition of the Empire into permanent Teutonic principalities thus began.

Constantius, created Patrician in A.D. 415, was now all-powerful; Placidia was forced to marry him, much against her will, and bore him a son, named Valentinian after his great-grandfather, the first of the name. In A.D. 420 he became consul for the third

time, and in the following year was raised to the rank of Augustus. This caused a breach of friendly relations between the Eastern and Western courts; Constantius was not recognised at Constantinople, where Arcadius had been succeeded in A.D. 408 by his son Theodosius II., then only seven years old. After a reign of seven months, however, Constantius died, and two years later Honorius followed him to the grave. Before his death he had quarrelled with his sister, the Empress Placidia, who was obliged to take refuge with her son Valentinian at the court of Constantinople. When Honorius died his secretary Johannes usurped the vacant throne; and the Eastern court at once fitted out an expedition for the restoration of the legitimate line. The makers of history were now the half-Roman, half-barbarian commanders, who had in them something of the mediæval knight and still more of the Italian *condottiere*. Two of these now began to play great parts on the world's stage. One was Boniface, who in A.D. 422 had been despatched to Spain as second in command to the master of soldiery Castinus, charged with the task of checking the advance of the Vandals. Having quarrelled with his superior, he made his way to Africa, raised a mercenary army, and exerted an authority which had scarcely any colour of legitimacy. He now threw the weight of his support on the side of Placidia, and thus diverted a portion of the troops of Johannes from the defence of Italy. The usurper enlisted in his service a still more famous captain, Aetius, who had spent the years of his youth as

a hostage amongst Goths and Huns and had knit up many friendships with the enemies who might one day, as he saw, become allies. He now raised a force of 6,000 Huns for his master's defence; but as he approached Ravenna he learnt that his cause was lost. The Byzantine fleet, indeed, was scattered by a storm and the admiral, Ardaburius, captured. But the land forces under Aspar made their way to Italy by Sirmium and Aquileia; Ravenna surrendered without striking a blow, and the usurper was put to death. Aëtius hastened to make his peace with the Empress, and swore allegiance to Valentinian III., who was proclaimed Emperor on October 23, A.D. 425.

The jealousies of the military commanders soon led to the further dismemberment of the crumbling Empire. In A.D. 427 Felix, the commander-in-chief at Ravenna, induced the Empress to recall Boniface from Africa. But Boniface was a man of no ordinary mould. In his complex character the saint, the knight, and the freebooter were strangely blended. He had been a friend of St. Augustine, and for a moment had fallen under the spell of monastic life; now he was the husband of a wealthy wife and an almost independent ruler in Africa. He refused to obey the summons of the court, defeated the troops sent against him, and at length, when a second army landed in Africa, called in the aid of the Vandals, who for years past had been devastating Spain. It was a disastrous blunder; for though Boniface was able, by the aid of his new allies, to bring the Empire to terms, he soon found that the

barbarians were not disposed to relax their hold upon the rich provinces in which they had set foot. For two years they besieged him in Hippo, and although they failed to reduce his stronghold, all Africa except a handful of coast towns fell under the Vandal dominion, and in A.D. 435 their king, Gaiserich, was recognised by the Empire. Carthage, indeed, was rescued by Valentinian, but four years later it fell into the hands of the Vandals.

Meantime Boniface had met with a tragic fate. Aëtius had won distinction by successful campaigns against the Franks in Gaul, and having caused Felix to be murdered in A.D. 430, attained a position of almost unlimited authority at Ravenna as master of soldiery. Placidia was determined to be rid of him, and summoned Boniface to Italy to take his office. But Aëtius was too powerful to be thus deposed, and a civil war ensued, which ended in the death of Boniface. We would gladly believe the story that the rivals decided the issue by single combat, and that Boniface with his dying breath commended his wife to the victor as the only man worthy of her hand; but it is almost certain that these are legends. Yet they have a value, inasmuch as they reveal the fact that the age of chivalry had begun to dawn.

Still the Empress would not yield, and appointed Sebastian, the son-in-law of Boniface, master of soldiery. Aëtius turned once again to his Hunnish friends, and with their aid imposed his terms upon the court. Henceforth, as Patrician and master of soldiery, he was all-powerful at Ravenna. Posterity

Photo.] [Alinari.

THE MAUSOLEUM OF PLACIDIA AT RAVENNA.

has agreed to regard him as the hero of the struggle with Attila and the saviour of Europe from the "Scourge of God"; but impartial criticism is forced to abate somewhat of this claim. So long as the menace of the Huns was directed against the Eastern Empire alone, Aëtius was their friend, and more than once (as we have seen) owed his power to the aid of Hunnish auxiliaries; it was not until Gaul was threatened that he opposed them by diplomacy and force of arms.

The dealings of the Eastern court with the new power form a pitiful story. Theodosius II. was a weak ruler whose name is only remembered in connection with the code of law issued by his authority in A.D. 438; the government was in the hands of his sister Pulcheria, who was but two years older than himself, an austere Christian, dedicated to perpetual virginity. In A.D. 421 she chose as her brother's bride Athenais, the accomplished daughter of a pagan philosopher of Athens, who on embracing Christianity took the name of Eudocia. As time went on the harmony of the court was disturbed by the quarrels of the sisters-in-law; but in the end Pulcheria triumphed, not without bloodshed, and Eudocia was banished to Jerusalem. With such rulers the Eastern Empire was helpless in the face of the Mongol hordes. As early as A.D. 424 the Huns exacted a tribute of 350 pounds of gold from Constantinople; ten years later, when their king Rua was succeeded by his nephews, Bleda and Attila, this was doubled. The Huns seem to have had no thought of effecting a

permanent conquest of the Empire, they simply treated it as a source of revenue and plunder to be exploited at will. In A.D. 441 they overran a great part of Illyricum and Thrace, and forced the Eastern court to conclude a humiliating peace. Some years later Attila caused his brother to be murdered and became the ruler of the Hunnish Empire; his suzerainty extended over a huge confederation of peoples from the Caucasus to the Rhine. In A.D. 447 he once more ravaged the European provinces of the Eastern Empire and wrung vast sums of money from the helpless rulers of Constantinople. Then he turned his face towards the rich spoils of the West, where strange happenings in the Imperial household furnished him with a pretext for war. Honoria, the sister of Valentinian III., had been compelled to take vows of perpetual chastity, but having proved unequal to their observance, she was placed for a time under the surveillance of her austere cousins at Constantinople. Returning to Italy with passions unsubdued, she found means to despatch a secret messenger to Attila, bearing a ring and a proposal of marriage. Attila's reply was brought by an embassy which not only expressed his willingness to give Honoria a place in his harem, but also demanded the immediate cession of half the Western Empire as her dowry (A.D. 450); and when the demand was refused the Huns crossed the Rhine, half a million strong, destroyed Metz and other cities, and marched on Orleans. Aetius, who had fought several campaigns in Gaul with varying success against the

Burgundians, Franks, and Visigoths, now formed an alliance with his old enemy Theoderid, the Visigothic king, in view of the imminent danger. Orleans was saved, and as the waves of Attila's host ebbed slowly eastwards, bearing the spoil of smoking cities, the allies fell upon them between Troyes and Metz and inflicted a heavy loss upon their unwieldy columns. The "Battle of Châlons" has been counted amongst the decisive struggles of the world's history; but it was neither fought at Châlons nor was it decisive, though it was certainly bloody, and cost the life of Theoderid, whose Goths probably bore the brunt of the fighting. Aëtius did not pursue the retreating enemy, probably feeling that he might yet need their help.

A year passed by, and the tide of invasion swept over Northern Italy. Aquileia was blotted out of existence, and half a score of other cities fell into the hands of the Huns. Aëtius and his master prepared to seek refuge at Constantinople, now again ruled by an Emperor worthy of the name, for Theodosius II. had died in A.D. 450, leaving but one daughter, Eudoxia, who was married to Valentinian III.; and Pulcheria consented to become the wife (in name only) of Marcian, who at once refused payment of Attila's tribute and sent troops to the aid of the West. No human power, indeed, could have saved Rome from destruction had the Huns turned southwards. But where Alaric had dared, Attila doubted. It may be that he feared the vengeance of Heaven, which, as men believed, had overtaken the presumption of the Visigoth;

and when St. Leo the Great faced him in his camp by the lake of Garda with the message "Thus far and no farther," the strength of this world was once again confounded by its weakness. Attila returned whence he came; a year later he was found dead in his tent, bewailed by the bride and widow of a single night, and

> The Empire built of scorn
> Agonised, dissolved, and sank.

Not less dramatic was the end that befell Aëtius. He had attained the highest position open to a subject of the Emperor, and as his son Gaudentius was betrothed to Valentinian's daughter, he might well hope that his descendants would sit upon the Imperial throne. But his treacherous master listened to the slanders of his base enemies, and having summoned Aëtius to an audience, drew his sword for the first and last time and slew him in cold blood (September 21, A.D. 454). Six months later he paid the just penalty of his crime, when two of his guards, Optila and Thraustila, who had been in the service of the Patrician, murdered him as he was practising archery.

With Valentinian III. perished the last descendant of Theodosius, and the days of the Western Empire were numbered, for the phantom Emperors who pass across the stage in the twenty years that follow were not the true rulers even of Italy. The first of these was Petronius Maximus, a man of high birth but no merit, whose offers of marriage were indignantly rejected by the widowed Empress

Eudoxia. She is said to have called in the aid of Gaiserich, who landed in Italy, sacked Rome, and carried away the Empress and her daughters; Maximus himself was ignominiously killed while flying from the enemy.

M. Mæcilius Avitus was now proclaimed Emperor in Southern Gaul, and, marching southwards, reigned for a few months in Rome, while his general, Ricimer, a Suevian by birth, defeated the Vandal fleet at sea. Soon, however, Ricimer turned against his master, defeated him, and seized the reins of power, which he held until his death in A.D. 472. He was careful however, to maintain a succession of Emperors, for whom, when possible, he obtained recognition from the Eastern court. The first of these, Julius Valerius Majorianus, was an enlightened ruler, and deserves to be remembered for his enactments in relief of the oppressed *curiales* and against the destruction of ancient monuments in Rome; but the failure of an expedition fitted out against the Vandals led to his fall in A.D. 461. He gave place to Libius Severus, a mere figurehead; Severus was followed by Anthemius, the nominee of the Eastern Augustus,[1] and the father-in-law of Ricimer. Both East and West fitted out great armadas for the invasion of Vandal Africa, but the Eastern commander, Basiliscus, was outwitted by Gaiserich, while Marcellinus, Anthemius' general, was assassinated, and the pride of Old and New Rome was humbled in the dust. Ricimer soon quarrelled

[1] Marcian had died in A.D. 457, when Leo was elected Emperor by the army.

with his son-in-law, whom he despised as a "Greekling," and besieged him in Rome. Leo now sent Olybrius, the son-in-law of Valentinian III., to Italy as mediator, but also as the bearer of a sealed letter ordering Ricimer's execution. This fell into the hands of the Patrician, who invested Olybrius with the purple; Anthemius failed to save himself from the axe of the executioner by joining the crowd of beggars who thronged the porch of St. Chrysogonus. In three months' time Ricimer and Olybrius were also dead. Gundobald, Ricimer's nephew, now set up Glycerius as Emperor at Ravenna, but Leo declined to recognise him and sent Julius Nepos, the husband of his niece, to Rome, where he ruled for fourteen months and was then deposed by his general Orestes, who placed his own son, Romulus, on the throne. He received the nickname Augustulus, perhaps as the successor of a Julius; and by the irony of fate Augustus the Little, though not in truth the last Roman Emperor, was the last Emperor to reign in the Rome of Augustus the Great. On October 22, A.D. 476, he was forced to abdicate by Odovacar, a barbarian from the far North, who headed a mutiny of mercenaries; and when, in A.D. 477, the Eastern Emperor Zeno refused to entertain the petition of the subservient Senate of Rome that he would grant Odovacar the rank of Patrician and the vice-regency of the West, Odovacar ruled in Italy as Wallia ruled in Aquitaine or Gaiserich in Africa; in other words, Italy became one of the Teutonic principalities of the West.

It is often said that the Western Empire fell in A.D. 476; but the statement is not true. The Eastern court still recognised Julius Nepos, who lived on at Salona until A.D. 480, as the Western Augustus, and referred Odovacar's request for the patriciate to his decision; and when Nepos died the Empire became once more united under a single ruler. Rome had long since ceased to be its capital, and no epoch in the world's history was closed by the final transference of the seat of Imperial power to the shores of the Bosphorus. Nor could any man foresee that the city whose world-power had passed away was destined to revive her claim to universal dominion as the seat of a spiritual kingdom which, in the words of an English philosopher, is "none other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

TABLE I.

THE DESCENDANTS OF AUGUSTUS.

C. Julius Cæsar. = Julia = M. Atius Balbus.

Atia = C. Octavius.

Octavia (*Table II.*). = Scribonia (1) = AUGUSTUS, 27 B.C.–14 A.D. = (2) Livia (*Table III.*).

M. Claudius Marcellus (1)
TIBERIUS (3) = Julia = (2) M. Vipsanius Agrippa = (1) Pomponia (*Table III.*).

Agrippina = Germanicus (*Table III.*). Agrippa Postumus. Vipsania = TIBERIUS (*Table III.*).

Nero = Julia, daughter of Drusus (*Table III.*). Drusus = Æmilia Lepida. GAIUS (CALIGULA), 37–41. = (1) Junia Claudilla. (2) Livia Orestilla. (3) Lollia Paulina. (4) Cæsonia. Agrippina = (1) Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (*Table IV.*). (2) Crispus Passienus. (3) CLAUDIUS (*Table III.*).

Julia Drusilla.

C. Cæsar. L. Cæsar. Julia = L. Æmilius Paulus.

NERO, 54–68. = (1) Octavia. (2) Poppæa Sabina. (3) Statilia Messalina.

Æmilia Lepida = M. Junius Silanus.

Claudia.

M. Silanus. L. Silanus. D. Silanus. Daughters.

M. Vinicius = Livilla.

L. Silanus.

Drusilla = M. Æmilius Lepidus.

TABLE II.

THE DESCENDANTS OF OCTAVIA.

C. Claudius Marcellus (1) = Octavia = (2) M. Antonius.

M. Vipsanius Agrippa (1) = Marcella maior = (2) Iullus Antonius (son of M. Antonius).

Paullus Æmilius Lepidus (1) = M. Valerius Messalla Barbatus (2) = Marcella minor.

Iullus Antonius.

L. Antonius.

Claudia Pulcra = P. Quinctilius Varus.

(*a*) Domitia Lepida = M. Valerius Messalla Barbatus.

Valeria MESSALINA = CLAUDIUS (*Table III.*).

Antonia maior = L. Domitius Ahenobarbus.

Germanicus = Antonia minor (*Table III.*).

Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (1) = Agrippina (*Table I.*) = (2) Crispus Passienus = Domitia (3) CLAUDIUS (*Table III.*).

Domitia Lepida (*a*).

NERO.

TABLE III.

THE CLAUDIAN CÆSARS.

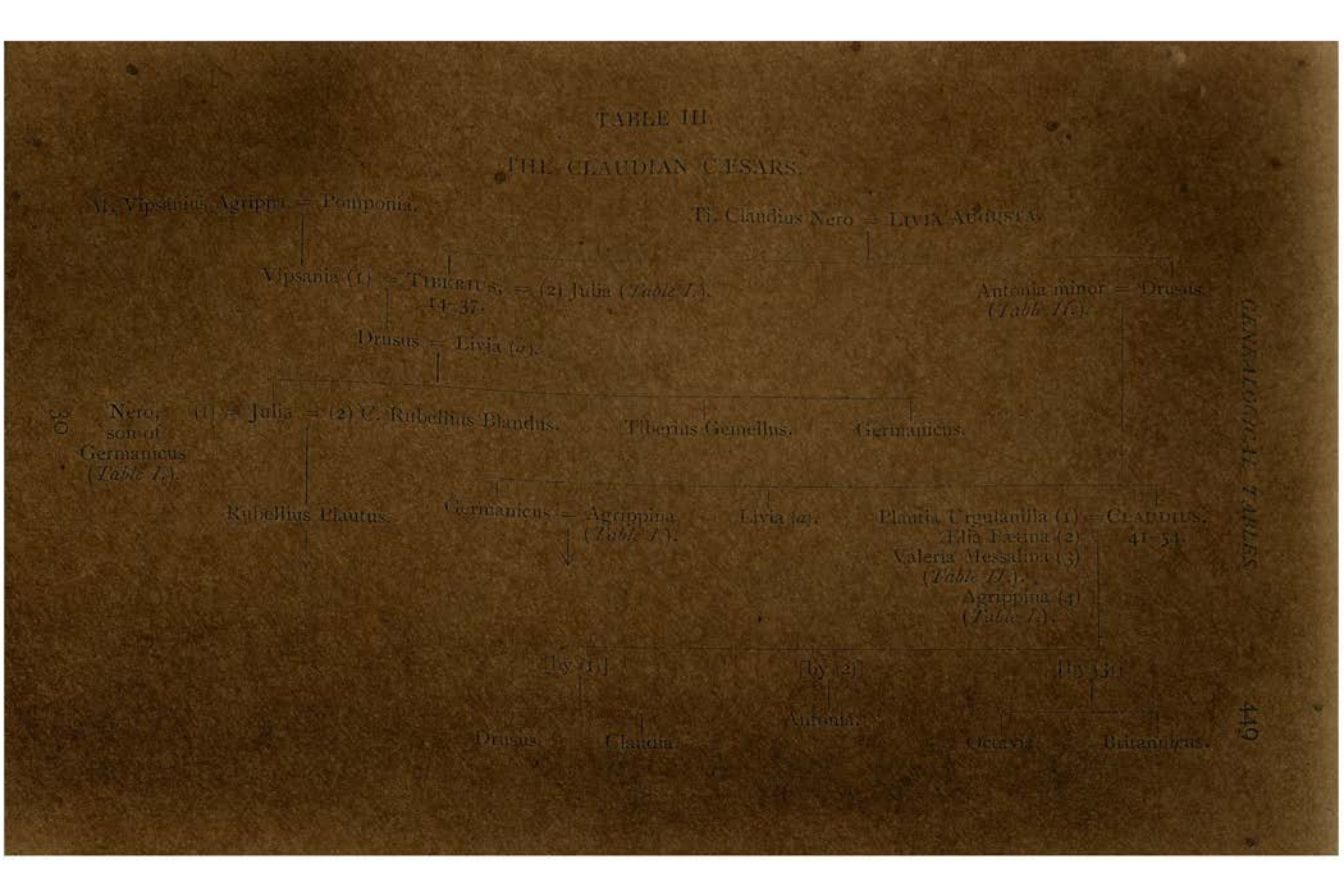


TABLE IV.

THE FLAVIAN EMPERORS.

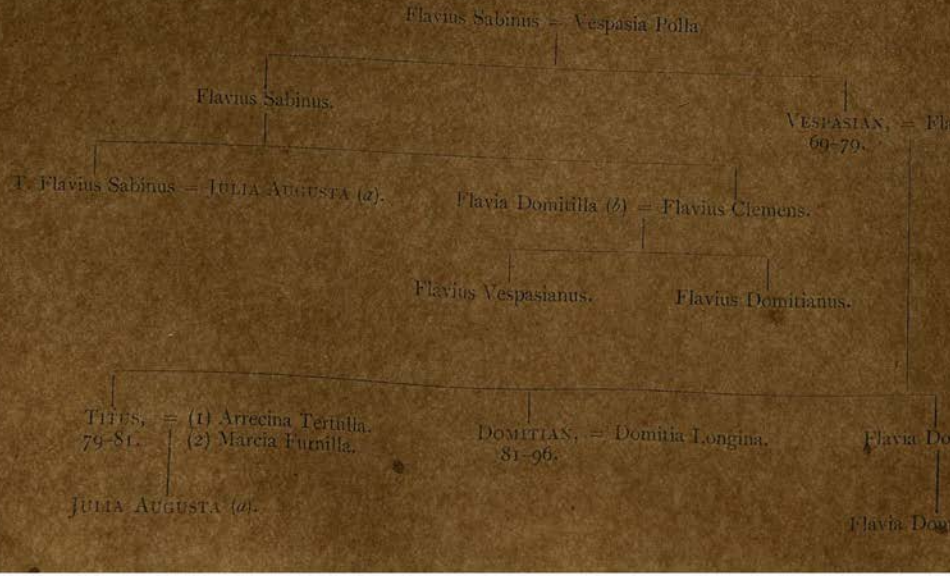

Flavius Sabinus = Vespasia Polla
Flavius Sabinus.
Vespasian, 69–79. = Flavia Domitilla.
T. Flavius Sabinus = Julia Augusta (a).
Flavia Domitilla (b) = Flavius Clemens.
Flavius Vespasianus.
Flavius Domitianus.
Titus, 79–81. = (1) Arrecina Tertulla. (2) Marcia Furnilla.
Domitian, 81–96. = Domitia Longina.
Flavia Domitilla.
Julia Augusta (a).
Flavia Domitilla (b).

TABLE V.

THE FAMILY OF TRAJAN AND HADRIAN.

TABLE VI.

THE ANTONINE EMPERORS.

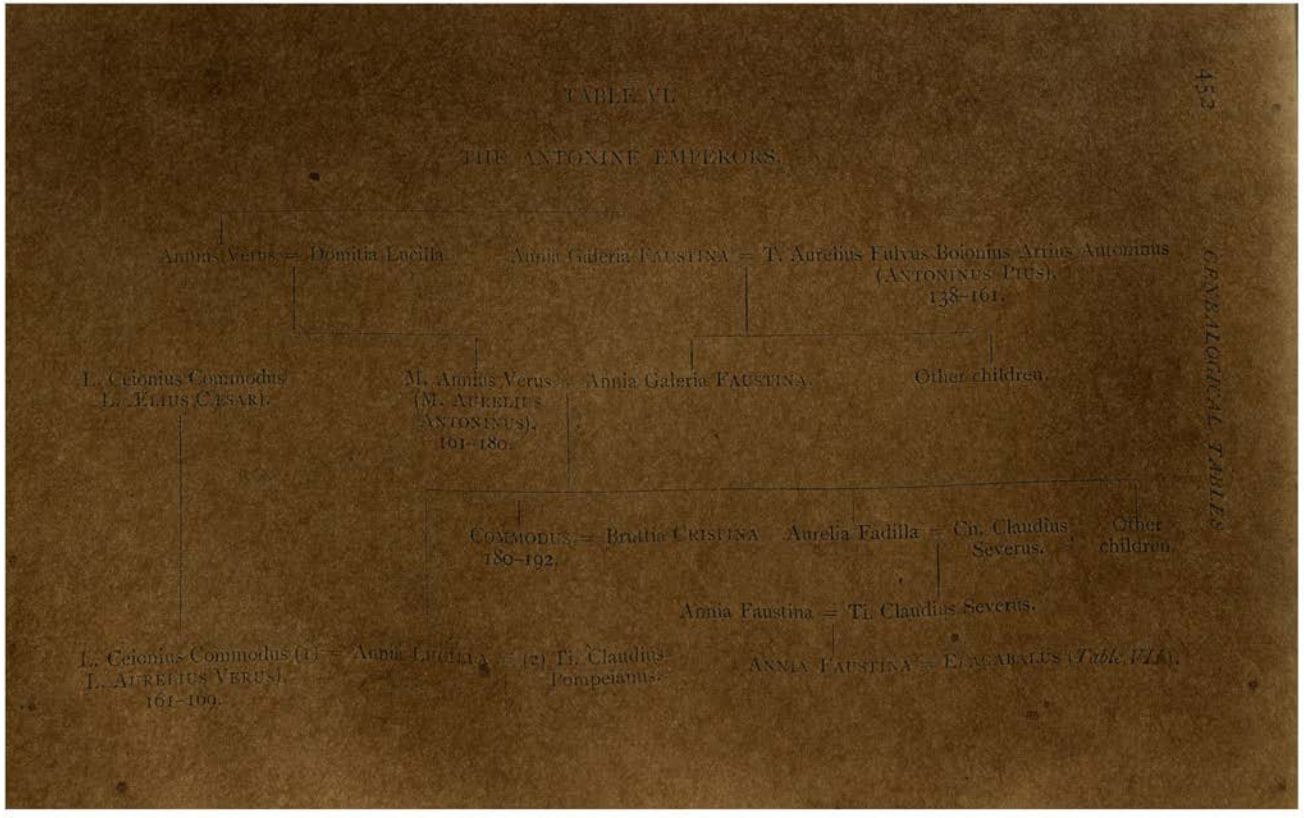

Annius Verus = Domitia Lucilla
Annia Galeria FAUSTINA = T. Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus (ANTONINUS PIUS), 138–161.
L. Ceionius Commodus L. ÆLIUS CÆSAR.
M. Annius Verus (M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS), 161–180.
Annia Galeria FAUSTINA.
Other children.
COMMODUS = Bruttia CRISPINA
Aurelia Fadilla = Cn. Claudius Severus.
Other children.
Annia Faustina = Ti. Claudius Severus.
L. Ceionius Commodus (1) = Annia Lucilla = (2) Ti. Claudius Pompeianus.
L. AURELIUS VERUS, 161–169.
ANNIA FAUSTINA = ELAGABALUS (Table VII.).

TABLE VII.

THE DYNASTY OF THE SEVERI.

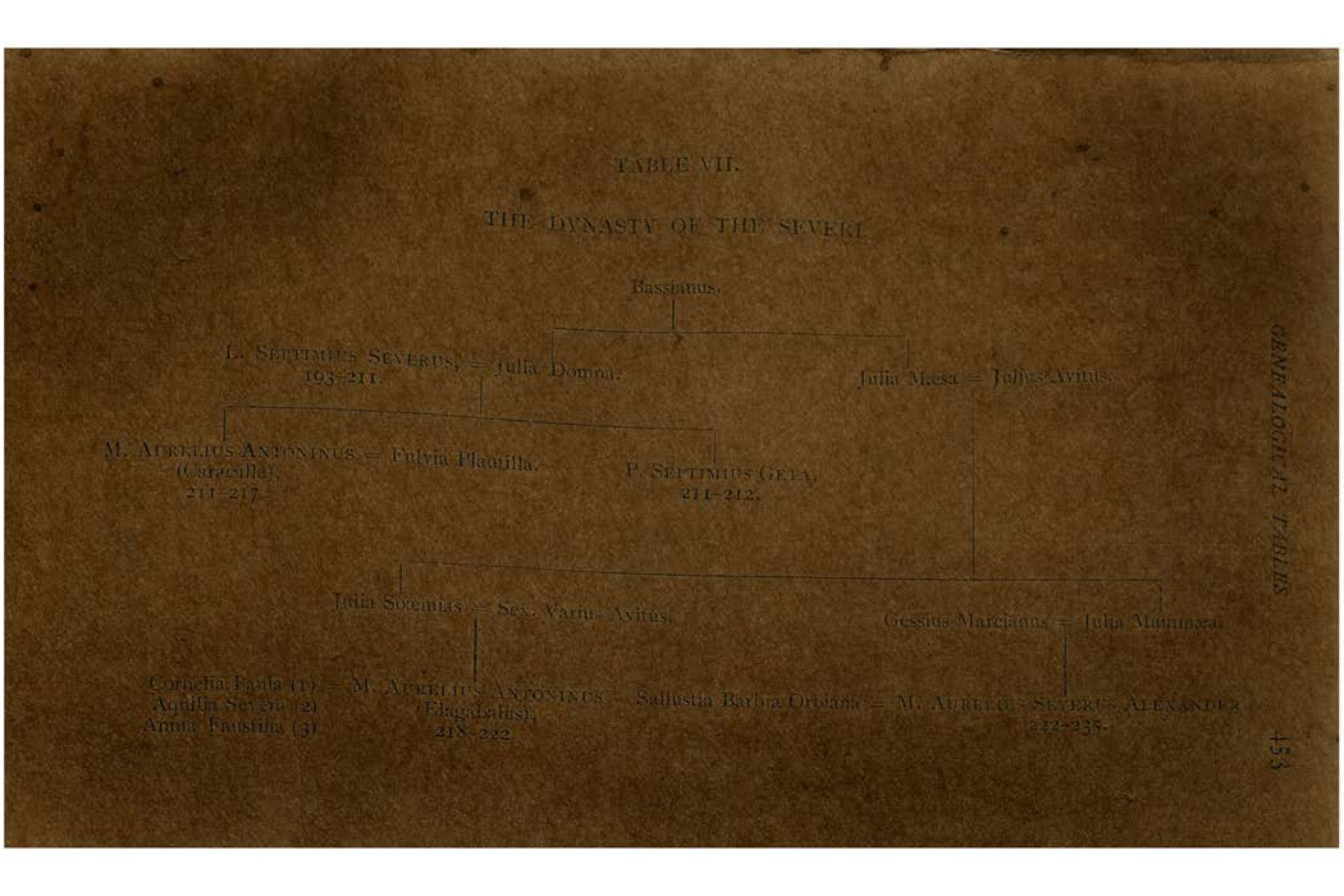

Bassianus.
L. Septimius Severus, 193–211. = Julia Domna.
Julia Maesa = Julius Avitus.
M. Aurelius Antoninus (Caracalla), 211–217. = Fulvia Plautilla.
P. Septimius (Geta), 211–212.
Julia Soaemias = Sex. Varius Avitus.
Gessius Marcianus = Julia Mammaea.
Cornelia Paula (1) = M. Aurelius Antoninus (Elagabalus), 218–222. = Sallustia Barbia Orbiana = M. Aurelius Severus Alexander 222–235.
Aquilia Severa (2)
Annia Faustina (3)

TABLE VIII.

THE FAMILY OF CONSTANTIUS.

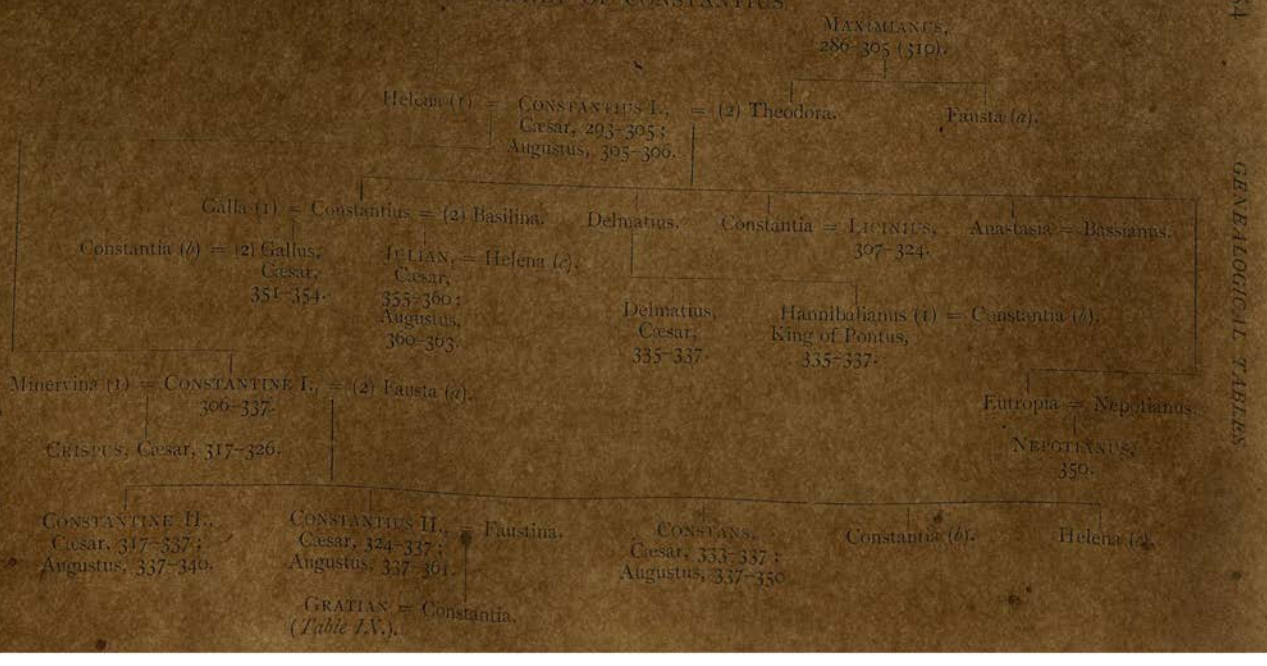
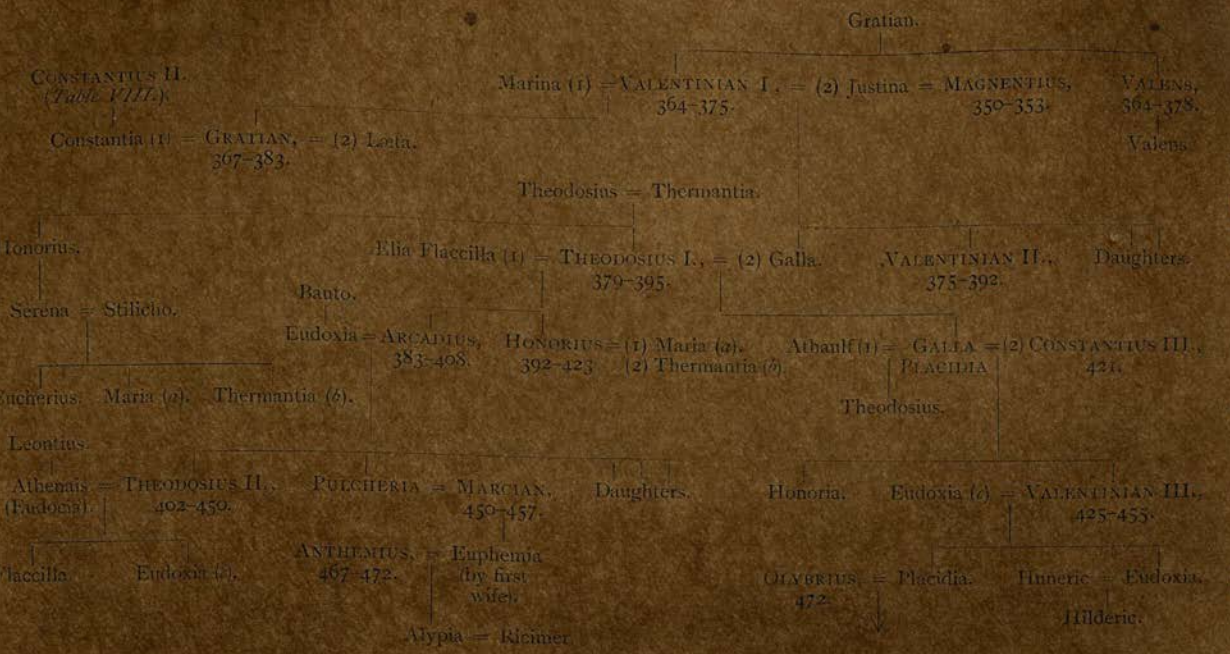

Maximianus, 286–305 (310).
Helena (1) = Constantius I., Cæsar, 293–305; Augustus, 305–306. = (2) Theodora.
Fausta (a).
Galla (1) = Constantius = (2) Basilina.
Delmatius.
Constantia = Licinius, 307–324.
Anastasia = Bassianus.
Constantia (b) = (2) Gallus, Cæsar, 351–354.
Julian = Helena (c), Cæsar, 355–360; Augustus, 360–393.
Delmatius, Cæsar, 335–337.
Hannibalianus (1) = Constantia (d), King of Pontus, 335–337.
Minervina (1) = Constantine I., 306–337. = (2) Fausta (a).
Crispus, Cæsar, 317–326.
Eutropia = Nepotianus.
Nepotianus, 350.
Constantine II., Cæsar, 317–337; Augustus, 337–340.
Constantius II., Cæsar, 324–337; Augustus, 337–361. = Faustina.
Constans, Cæsar, 333–337; Augustus, 337–350.
Constantia (b).
Helena (c).
Gratian = Constantia. (Table IX.).

TABLE IX.

THE FAMILY OF VALENTINIAN AND THEODOSIUS.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

TABLE I.

EMPERORS FROM AUGUSTUS TO THEODOSIUS I.

Augustus ...	B.C. 27–A.D. 14		A.D.
	A.D.	Macrinus, sole Emperor	217–218
Tiberius	14–37	Macrinus } ...	218
Gaius (Caligula) ...	37–41	Diadumenianus }	
Claudius	41–54	Antoninus (Elagabalus)	218–222
Nero	54–68	Severus Alexander ...	222–235
Galba	68–69	Maximinus Thrax ...	235–238
Otho	69	Gordian I. }	
Vitellius	69	Gordian II. }	238
Vespasian	69–79	Pupienus }	
Titus	79–81	Balbinus }	238
Domitian	81–96	Gordian III.	238–244
Nerva	96–98	Philippus Arabs, sole Emperor	244–247
Trajan	98–117	Philippus Arabs }	
Hadrian	117–138	Philippus junior } ...	247–249
Antoninus Pius ...	138–161	Decius	249–251
Marcus Aurelius }		Trebonianus Gallus }	
Lucius Verus } ...	161–169	Volusianus } ...	251–253
Marcus Aurelius, sole Emperor	169–177	Æmilianus	253
Marcus Aurelius }		Valerianus }	
Commodus } ...	177–180	Gallienus }	253–260
Commodus, sole Emperor	180–192	Gallienus, sole Emperor	260–268
Pertinax	193	Claudius II., Gothicus	268–270
Didius Julianus ...	193	Quintillus	270
Septimius Severus, sole Emperor	193–198	Aurelianus	270–275
Septimius Severus }		Tacitus	275–270
Antoninus (Caracalla) }	198–209	Florianus	276
Septimius Severus }		Probus	270–282
Antoninus (Caracalla) }	209–211	Carus	282–283
Geta }		Carinus }	
Antoninus (Caracalla) }	211–212	Numerianus } ...	283–284
Geta }		Diocletianus, sole Emperor	284–286
Antoninus (Caracalla), sole Emperor ...	212–217	Diocletianus }	
		Maximianus } ...	286–305
		Constantius I. }	
		Galerius } ...	305–306

TABLE I. *continued.*

	A.D.
Galerius Severus	306–307
Constantine I. Galerius Licinius	307–310
Constantine I. Galerius Licinius	310–311
Constantine I. Maximinus Daia Licinius	311–324
Constantine I. Constantine I., sole Emperor	324–337
Constantine II. Constantius II. Constans	337–340
Constantius II. Constans	340–350
Constantius II., sole Emperor	350–361

	A.D.
Julian	361–363
Jovian	363–364
Valentinian I. Valens	364–367
Valentinian I. Valens Gratian	367–375
Valens Gratian Valentinian II.	375–378
Gratian Valentinian II. Theodosius I.	378–383
Valentinian II. Theodosius I. Arcadius	383–392
Theodosius I. Arcadius Theodosius I. Arcadius Honorius	392–395

TABLE II.

EASTERN AND WESTERN EMPERORS.

Western Empire.	A.D.	Eastern Empire.	A.D.
Honorius	395–423	Arcadius	395–408
(Constantius III., 421)		Theodosius II.	408–450
Valentinian III.	(423) 425–455	Marcian	450–457
Petronius Maximus	455	Leo I.	457–474
Avitus	455–456	Leo II.	474
Majorian	457–461	Zeno	474–491
Libius Severus	461–465		
Anthemius	467–472		
Olybrius	472		
Glycerius	473–474		
Julius Nepos	474–475 (480)		
Romulus Augustulus	475–476		

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